

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE STUDY OF THE
COMMON PRAYER

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of the common-prayer book

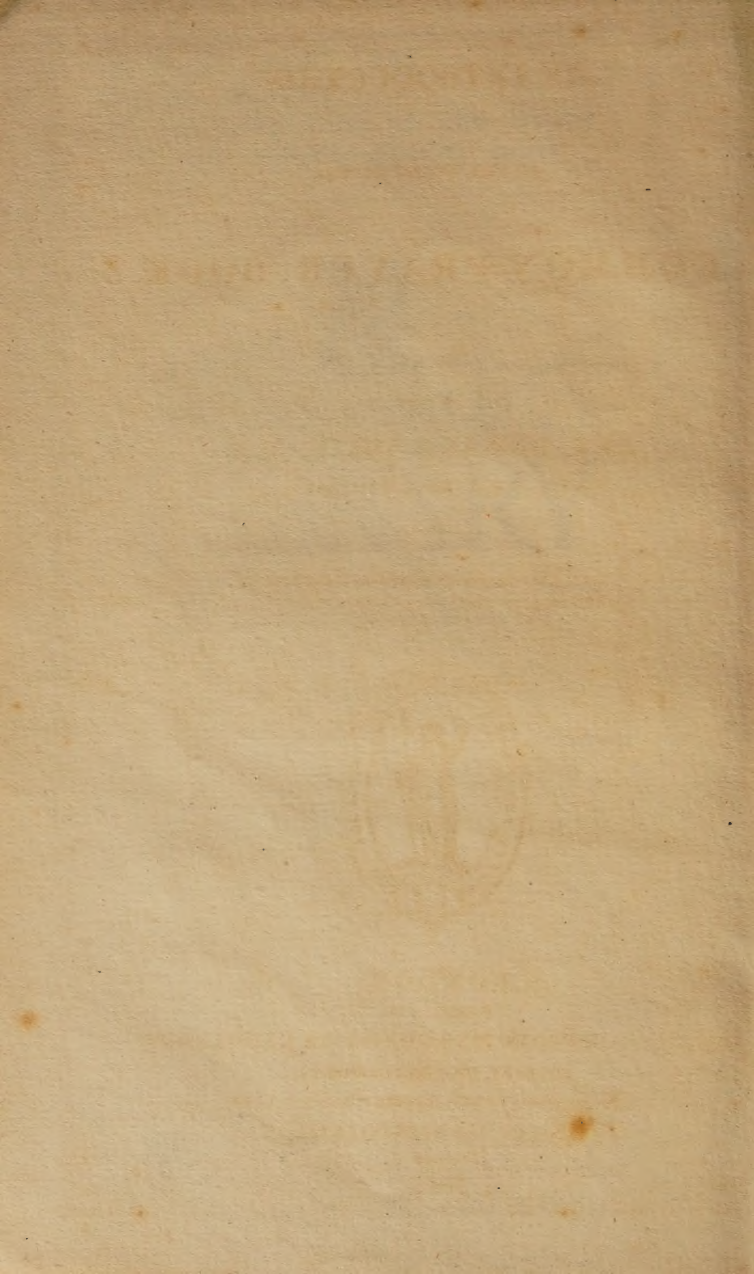


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AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE STUDY OF THE

COMMON-PRAYER BOOK.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD SMITH, M.A.

CURATE OF HOLYWELL, ~~GUILDSBOROUGH~~ GUILDSBOROUGH.

“ Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house;
And the place where thine honour dwelleth ”



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AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE STUDY OF THE

COMMON PRAYER BOOK

BY THE REV. EDWARD SMITH, M.A.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

SECOND EDITION, REVISED BY THE AUTHOR



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THE following pages pretend to very little originality. To do so would, perhaps, be to claim only their own condemnation in the judgment of all who know the excellence and completeness of existing Expositions of the English Common Prayer Book. The design has been little more than to digest the matter contained in the works of several approved liturgical writers, and to present an outline of them (very often nearly in their own words) as an aid to those who desire information upon the subject, but want time, means, or ability for its complete investigation.

BOCKING,
Christmas, 1841.

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AN
INTRODUCTION,
&c.

CHAPTER I.

FORMS OF PRAYER REASONABLE.

“Be not rash with thy mouth.”

ECCLES. V. 2.

THAT the use of set forms of prayer in public assemblies of the Christian Church is in itself not unlawful, or displeasing to Almighty God, would seem to be a proposition self-evident to sound reason and pure conscience, even though all warrant of Holy Scripture and experience of history were wanting to its demonstration. To object to some particular form of prayer might be reasonable, or even necessary; but to condemn the use of all forms, and the appointment of any set service, averring that “though the words be good, the use is naught,” is manifestly unreasonable. And it would be scarcely credible, that opposers of the Church of England could have carried their objection against her Liturgy to this length, were it not certain that they have distinctly done so¹. For reason, unaided by Holy Scripture and experience, could hardly pronounce set forms of prayer essentially objectionable in public worship, though they

CHAP. I.
Set forms
of prayer
not unlaw-
ful;

¹ See Hooker, Eccles. Pol. V. xxvi. 2, note 24, and xxvii. 1. Keble.

CHAP. I.

should be esteemed unnecessary. To use them must be at least allowable. The same prayers may, surely, never be judged right if uttered extemporaneously, and wrong if clothed in an appointed form of words.

but valuable, if not necessary;

But the use of forms of prayer in public worship may well challenge, at the voice of sound reason, to be pronounced not merely allowable, but also highly valuable, and perhaps even necessary. For if it be granted², as it must be, that the two main objects of public worship are the glory of God, and the edification of men; the honour of Him who is worshipped, and the benefit of his worshippers; and if it be not denied, that in the public prayers of the Church those means are to be employed which either have a manifest tendency, or may be proved most generally fit and effectual, to promote due solemnity and unrestrained devotion,—then, to the furtherance of both these ends, the use of premeditated forms of prayer must reasonably be esteemed valuable.

as suitable to the glory of God;

With reference to the glory of God, it is manifestly reasonable that the desires of men when presented before Him, and the words in which they are presented, should be carefully considered, and prepared with forethought, not rashly entertained or uttered hastily. And that all public assemblies of any society for the purpose of united worship, should be characterized by unity of feeling and of expression, is not less manifestly suitable to the honour of the Almighty. But in no other way than by the use of prescribed forms of prayer can the advantages of forethought and of unity in the assemblies of the Church be ordinarily attained. And therefore, the reverence naturally due to God, and the very nature of a Church, render prescribed forms of prayer in public worship obviously valuable.

and to the

With reference, again, to the edification of men,

² Hooker, V. vi. 2.

no less than to the glory of God, the use of prescribed forms of prayer, which may be studied and approved beforehand, is manifestly a most valuable, if not necessary, aid to setting free the judgment and attention of worshippers, at the hour of worship, from all doubtful consideration, as to the propriety or completeness of the petitions in which they are assembled to unite their hearts and voices. The undivided thoughts and affections of those who pray, already satisfied as to the matter and expression of the prayers to be offered, may be devoted altogether to the recollection of God's presence in their assembly, and to the pouring out their confessions and requests before Him. Whereas, if any congregation were uncertain what requests the minister was about to offer, or in what words to offer them, their attention and judgment must be necessarily suspended, and their thoughts directed, not immediately to God, but only to God's minister. And instead of pouring out their affections freely and without suspicion as the prayers ascended, they must in all prudence check their flow, and reserve their warmth, lest unadvisedly, in a momentary excitement, their hearts should yield assent to something not before considered, and which, on due reflection afterwards, they might be unable to approve.

Apart then from any express command, or implied sanction, of the Holy Scriptures to the use of set forms of prayer, their use in public worship must, by sound reason, be pronounced obviously valuable; as conducive to the main ends to which public worship is designed; as most suitable to the majesty of God, and to the weakness of men; as generally fit and effectual to the furtherance of a due combination of solemnity with unrestrained devotion, of sobriety with warmth, of unity with freedom.

But if stronger evidence were needful to the

CHAP. I.
edification
of men.

And this
even reason
might in-
form us,
were Scrip-
ture silent.

But the

CHAP. I.

practice of
objectors
themselves
confirms
the lawfulness
and
value of set
forms of
prayer;

since they
are necessarily
used
even by
those who
object to
them;
only the
forms of
objectors
are not so
safe as our
own.

The arguments
of
objectors,
even though
inconsistent,
examined.

value, and almost necessity, of some previously composed forms of prayer in public worship, it might be found, where least expected, in the practice of those very persons who have been foremost to object, that forms are either valueless or unlawful. There is indeed no congregation of worshippers to be found, nor can be any, in which a form is not used in addresses to Almighty God. For, let the minister pour out his prayer with never so little premeditation, and with never so great variety of words on various occasions, his prayer, unstudied as it is by him, is no less a form to the people, than if it had been pre-arranged. The people are no less confined to pray in that form of words which their minister on each occasion delivers to them, than if that form had been written in a book, and always one; than if it had been delivered to their minister by authority of the Church, instead of by their minister on his own authority to themselves. Those who refuse forms are, in fact, confined to forms, notwithstanding their refusal. Only they are confined to forms which, as they know them not before their utterance, so, when uttered, they may either approve or disapprove; to forms appointed by individual fancy, not by general consent and approbation; to forms liable to the greatest imperfection, as hastily conceived, and uttered without due revision; instead of to forms reverently digested, carefully revised, and by the accumulated piety and wisdom of successive ages commended to the judgment and affection of all worshippers.

The practice of objectors to the use of set forms of prayer thus contradicting their own objections to them, it is the less necessary to examine at large all the reasons which have been urged against their lawfulness or value. Those disputants can have little claim to consideration for consistency and truth, who, having separated themselves from the assemblies of the Church on the ground of con-

scientious objection to the use of stated forms of prayer in public worship, have been found in their own assemblies to establish forms anew, according to their own devices, whether led by an intuitive, unconscious perception of their value, or constrained by an involuntary conviction of their necessity.

A very slight examination of the chief objections usually urged by separatists, will abundantly prove the unjustifiable character of a violation on their account of unity among Christians.

Perhaps the most serious objection which has been urged against forms of prayer by the ablest objectors to them is this, that they are a hindrance to fervent zeal, and a slight to the divine gift of praying with the Spirit. To this objection it might be a sufficient answer to repeat, that the great body of those who urge it do, nevertheless, themselves also use some forms of prayer notwithstanding their objection. Or the weakness of this objection might be shown from the example of saints in the Old Testament, and of Christ himself and his Apostles in the New, of whom it is certain that they used forms of prayer. Or, again, the use of forms of prayer in all Christian Churches, from the Apostles until now, might afford sufficient evidence that by use of forms the Spirit is not hindered. But, reserving the testimony of Scripture and of history, let us appeal, first of all, to sound reason only.

Let it be only well considered what is really meant by 'praying with the Spirit,' and by 'the gift of prayer.' For if by the expression, 'praying with the Spirit,' it be intended that, in order to effectual fervent prayer it is necessary for those who pray to prefer requests by uttering words without premeditation, upon sudden impulse, hastily and rashly; and that the Spirit does not aid the prayers of those who weigh beforehand what they should request, and meditate the most appropriate method of requesting; in this case it need only be re-

The first objection, That set forms of prayer hinder the gift of praying with the Spirit.

The first objection considered by the light of reason, and with reference to the meaning of the phrase,— 'Praying with the Spirit.'

CHAP. I.

The same
objection
with refer-
ence to a
second
meaning of
the phrase;

plied, that in such a judgment it must be impossible for sound reason and pure conscience to concur.

But if by 'praying with the Spirit,' be meant, praying with the assistance of the Holy Ghost; with solemnity of thought and warmth of feeling; with a due sense of the majesty of God and the weakness of man; with faith, and hope, and love: then, obviously, the use of forms of prayer is so far from affording any hindrance to this spirit, that it must be esteemed rather an assistance to it. For the use of forms tends to promote that reverence and self-possession, without which men affront Almighty God when they approach Him; since by disengaging the mind from all necessity of attention to a choice of words, and a due arrangement of petitions, at the time of uttering them, it leaves the worshippers no other task than that of fixing their recollection upon God's unseen presence with them. The use of pre-arranged forms of words in praying, must clearly be a valuable aid to men in general, when they would pour out uninterruptedly their souls in prayer.

and with
reference to
a third
meaning.

If, again, by the expression, 'the gift of prayer,' which it is objected that we slight by the use of forms, it be meant, that the Christian minister receives upon his ordination some distinct peculiar gift of God, by which he is enabled, through the Spirit, to offer up the devotions of a congregation more acceptably when unstudied than when clothed in forms; it may, indeed, be readily allowed, that were such a gift vouchsafed to Christian ministers, it would be most unfitting to neglect the use of it. But, in truth, the notion of such a gift is a mere delusion, for Scripture is as far from containing any promise of such gift, as reason or experience from acknowledging any need of it. And even they who suppose themselves to possess this 'gift of prayer,' must allow that power which they possess to be, not a ministerial gift, but a natural talent or ac-

quired ability, since it is possessed by many no less perfectly before than after ordination to the sacred ministry.

That, then, which is called 'the gift of prayer' being in truth nothing more than a certain natural readiness of thought, or acquired fluency of speech, enabling men to pour out moving words without premeditation, and so to excite the affections of their hearers; it can be by no means reasonable, on account of such a gift, to forego in Christian assemblies those numerous advantages which have been shown already to attend upon the use of forms of prayer. Nay, much more reasonable rather would it be to control than to encourage the exercise of such a gift, because its tendency must be to lead those who exercise it to mistake their natural affections for the motions of God's Holy Spirit, and to utter, in their haste of heart and rashness of mouth, requests and words unsuited to the truth of Scripture and the character of God. Their congregations also must incur continual danger of being led astray unwittingly into false doctrine or irreverence, and of spending the sacred hours allotted to God's house, not so much themselves in praying unto God, as (which is worthless to their soul's health) in hearing a man pray³.

The first
objection
dismissed.

A second chief objection to the use of forms of prayer is this. The condition of every society, it is urged, undergoes continual change, and the wants of every congregation of worshippers must be different at different seasons. Much will be, therefore, often needed in their public prayers which the framers of a previously considered form could not possibly provide. That the confessions, and requests, and praises of a body of men should be at all times suitable to their existing circumstances, can never, it is reasoned, be attainable, so

A second
objection;

³ Dr. Scott. London Cases.

CHAP. I.

of which
the ground
is denied.

long as they shall be confined to the use of a set form of prayer.

But this objection must be met by an entire denial of the ground on which it rests. The condition and necessities of Christian congregations, as such, do not, in truth, ever vary in material respects, but remain, for the most part, of the same character at all times. That which Christians needed to confess from the beginning, they need to confess now; that which they needed to ask formerly, they need to ask now; and the same thanksgivings which were appropriate in the lips of the earliest Christian congregations, will be appropriate in every generation of Christians to the end of time. The substance of the Church's prayers is common to all ages. We⁴ come not before God in public assemblies merely to confess individual sins, or to seek the supply of individual necessities, or to render thanks for mercies individually received. This is the office of our devotions in private. In public we worship God as "one body," not as separate "members." And the present objection arises from an unperceived confusion between the offices of public and of private prayer, and from a forgetfulness of the true end and nature of assemblies of the Church. Particular confessions or requests, and individual thanksgivings, it is certain, never can by any one set general form be adequately expressed. But the expression of those common prayers and praises which, as one body though with many members, we present before our common Lord, may be far better made after one solemnly considered form, than by many inconsiderate effusions. The relief of those necessities which are shared by the universal Church; our requests, namely, for pardon of all sin, for peace of conscience, the succour of divine

The distinction between public and private prayers.

⁴ See Dean Comber, v. 19. Oxf. Ed. 1841.

grace, deliverance from sin and Satan, death and hell; our petitions for needful food and raiment, for health and strength, for protection and success in our concerns, for the peace of kingdoms, the prosperity of the Church, the propagation of the Gospel, and the honour of God's ministers:—all these, and many similar prayers, are in substance, at all times, the same. And why they should be uttered in new phrases daily, as if God were propitiated by mere language, and in which case, if some phrases were better, some must also of necessity be worse than others, rather than in one lasting, well-considered, well-known form, it must ever be most difficult for sound reason to discover. Such occasional needs, arising from the change of circumstances, as we are enabled to foresee, may be as well provided for in an appointed Liturgy as in extemporaneous effusions: such, on the other hand, as are not to be foreseen, must be met by occasional provision, whenever they are not, as they often are, subjects rather of private than of public prayer.

The third great objection to the use of established forms of prayer, as urged by the most competent objectors to them, is this: that the constant repetition of the same forms has in itself a tendency to deaden the affections, and to lessen attention to the matter of our prayers. A third objection,

But this objection has less weight than the former, and may be more readily dismissed. For it is, in truth, not an argument, but a mere assumption, and cannot claim to rest on any other evidence than the personal experience of such as use it. And if the experience of some teaches them that in using forms their attention fails, the experience of others teaches no less truly that, in their case, there is no failing. Certainly neither Scripture, nor sound reason (to which we now appeal), has ever concluded, that the attention must necessarily fail, and the warmth of feeling decay, from the mere cir- which is dismissed, as resting on a mere assumption.

CHAP. I.

cumstance that, needing daily certain things from God, we habitually express them in one same certain manner. That the attention may, and does often, fail in the use of forms of prayer, is indisputable, and admitted; but whether the fault lies in the forms, or in the carelessness of those who use them, is our question. If, indeed, attention were found to fail in the use of forms only, and at all times, while in the use of unpremeditated prayers it never failed, this objection would have great force. But none can have watched themselves narrowly, when praying free from forms in private, without discovering themselves as liable to wandering thoughts and failing warmth, as when confined to forms of prayer in public. And men in general, when once novelty was passed, would be found as little able or inclined to fix attention on the unpremeditated words of one whom they heard often, as on the well-known and accustomed accents of the Church. Or, supposing even that attention were more generally fixed in prayer by unpremeditated words than by a pre-considered form, yet it would be fixed on that point alone whence it should rather be withdrawn; it would be fixed on man, not God; on him who uttered, not on Him who "heareth prayer;" on the ability and eloquence of a mortal fellow worshipper and sinner, not on the all-glorious perfections and adorable attributes of the Immortal, Invisible, Eternal God.

The conclusion from sound reason.

That forms of prayer in public worship are not merely not unlawful in themselves, or valueless; but, on the contrary, most valuable, and perhaps even necessary to the ends of public worship, may be, therefore, satisfactorily concluded from the dictates of sound reason and pure conscience, and from the insufficiency of those objections which have been most ably and eagerly advanced against them. And this, apart from all command or sanction of the Holy Scripture.

CHAPTER II.

FORMS OF PRAYER SCRIPTURAL.

“When ye pray, say,
Our Father, which art in heaven.”

LUKE xi. 2.

THE approbation which sound natural reason and impartial conscience cannot but bestow upon the use of forms of prayer in the public worship of the Church, is abundantly confirmed by the decisive sanction of the Holy Scriptures.

Holy Scripture may be expected to warrant the use or rejection of forms of prayer in two ways, either by positive command, or by the sanction of approved example. And it has been usual with objectors to the use of forms, to insist on the production of some positive command of Scripture for their use, alleging that nothing ought to be considered lawful in the public worship of the Church, which has not been commanded. This, however, is an entirely false position, and cannot be maintained. For it is a mere assumption, and incapable of proof, that nothing may be esteemed lawful which has not been commanded. There are many things which, as they have not been commanded, so neither have they been forbidden; which, consequently, if they may not be thought lawful, neither may they be thought unlawful. They are, at least, indifferent; and of things which Scripture leaves indifferent, reason may safely judge. And reason, as we have seen already, judges sound forms of prayer

CHAP. II.

The Scriptures confirm the judgment of reason.

Objectors unreasonably require positive scriptural command for the use of forms of prayer:

CHAP. II.

but a positive command unnecessary,

both lawful and valuable, if not necessary to the ends of public worship.

Without inquiring, therefore, whether Holy Scripture positively commands the use of forms of prayer or no, we may safely esteem them lawful so long as it does not positively forbid them. And this no one pretends. Supposing, therefore, that no positive command can be found in Holy Scripture for the use of forms of prayer, the want of such command can never prove them unlawful; it only proves them not commanded. They may still be at least harmless, if not valuable; still not to be refused, if not to be desired. For, if they are not approved in Scripture, they are not condemned; if there is no injunction for their use, neither, on the other hand, is there any for their rejection.

and their objection recoils upon themselves.

But, further, let it be well considered that the force of this objection, if successful, must be felt as fully by the objectors, as by those against whom they urge it. They who triumph by this argument must fall by it; they must be slain by their own sword. For if nothing may lawfully be done in public worship but that which has been positively commanded, and pre-composed forms of prayer must be rejected from our assemblies because we have no direct injunction for their use, what, in this case, is to be judged concerning extemporaneous prayers, delivered without form? Are they positively commanded by the Scripture? And, if not, may we use them? Are they even so fairly to be approved as forms of prayer, when thus judged by the terms appointed of their own defenders? Forms, if not enjoined, are at least not forbidden. But can this be said of inconsiderate effusions? Is it not rather written, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God¹?"

It is not, then, to be required that Holy Scrip-

¹ Eccles. v. 2.

ture sanction the use of forms of prayer in public worship by direct command. It is sufficient if we find the sanction of approved example. And this we do find abundantly. CHAP. II.

As early as the days of Seth, the son of Adam, we read, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord²." But, as it is incredible that men did not "call upon the name of the Lord" before that time, the judgment of many wise men upon this passage has been, that it means, 'Then were regular forms of public worship first appointed³.' This, however, being an uncertain opinion, is to be mentioned only, not insisted on. The use of forms of prayer sanctioned by scriptural examples.
Seth.

But whatever may have been the practice of the patriarchs, we need ascend no higher than to Moses for a plain example of the usage of a form of public prayer. The song sung after their deliverance at the Red Sea, by "Moses and the children of Israel," to which "Miriam and all the women⁴" made responses, must unquestionably have been a pre-composed form, not an extemporaneous effusion, unless we will believe that the whole body of the people was inspired, at the same moment, to utter the same words. And even in that supposition, which no reasonable man will make, it remains yet to be accounted for, on what principle, if forms are unlawful, this very hymn could have become, and continued long after, a stated part of the Jewish Liturgy, as we are assured it did by very competent authority⁵. Moses,

The words in which God himself ordained that the priests should bless his people, recorded in the sixth chapter of the book of Numbers, afford another instance whence it is impossible not to conclude at least the lawfulness of stated forms. And since God himself not only ordained this form of The form of blessing by the priests under the Law.

² Gen. iv. 26. ³ See Dean Comber, v. 27. ⁴ Exod. xv. 1—20.

⁵ Lewis's Hebrew Republic, quoted in Hooker, V. xxvi. 2, note 26.

CHAP. II. words, but promised that on its use He would really confer his blessing⁶; and since we have it actually recorded in another place of Holy Scripture, that “the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven⁷,” who can doubt that the use of this form was as valuable as it was lawful? For, had the priests presumed to neglect the form appointed for them by God, and to select phrases of their own, they, doubtless, would not have been heard, nor would the blessing of the Lord have followed them.

Forms of
expiation;
and upon
offering
first-fruits.

Other forms, again, were expressly ordained for the use of the people of Israel, after they should be settled in the promised land. For the expiation of an uncertain murder, and at the time of offering their first-fruits and tithes, it was expressly commanded them what form of words to use. These words may be found in the twenty-first and twenty-sixth chapters of the book of Deuteronomy. And in the twenty-seventh chapter of the same book occurs a very solemn form of public service, the cursing upon Mount Ebal, and the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, ordained by Moses and performed by Joshua⁸; which is the type of our own Communion Service for Ash-Wednesday at the present day.

The prop-
hets.

With regard, then, to the people of Israel, in the earlier period of their history, there can be no doubt that the use of a prescribed form of prayer was lawful and advantageous to them. At a later period, in the prophets, there are instances to the same point. Hosea⁹ and Joel¹⁰ both record forms of words expressly appointed for the people and the priests to use in publicly addressing Almighty God.

The Book
of Psalms.

But to give one example which of itself may suffice for all, what is to be thought of the practice

⁶ Numb. vi. 27.

⁷ 2 Chron. xxx. 27.

⁸ Joshua viii. 33,

⁹ Hosea xiv. 2.

¹⁰ Joel ii. 17.

of king David, the man beloved of God, and beloved for his zeal to the sanctuary and services of God? Why was the book of Psalms written? Of some Psalms we understand from Scripture, that they were designed for use in public worship. The ninety-second Psalm, for instance, is headed, "A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day." In the sixteenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles we read, "On that day David delivered first this Psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hands of Asaph and his brethren." And then follows the hundred and fifth Psalm, delivered to Asaph, that it might be chanted by the choir. In the second book of Chronicles we read in like manner of Hezekiah¹, that "he commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer." Ezra observed the same practice at the rebuilding of the temple, when "they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord²," a practice which, indeed, we have reason to think has been observed, by the Church on earth, throughout all time, and even by the angels in heaven, and which will be observed throughout eternity. Isaiah, in that vision wherein he saw the throne of God, heard also the seraphim; "One cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory³." And St. John in his Revelation adds, "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come⁴."

That the Jews, in short, while they were God's chosen people, not merely used forms of prayer in public worship, but used them always; and even that their prayers and praises were in a similar order with that of our own form of Common Prayer, and that this order of their hymns and

The chosen people always used forms of prayer.

¹ 2 Chron. xxix. 25. 30.

³ Isaiah vi. 3.

² Ezra iii. 11.

⁴ Rev. iv. 8.

CHAP. II. supplications continued to our Saviour's time, the evidence is so complete as to have satisfied the most learned and impartial inquirers⁵. And therefore it is not to be supposed that what in God's chosen people once was lawful, now is unlawful; that what once was necessary, has now lost all value. If the Jews during all the time they were God's chosen people thus used forms of prayer, forms of prayer cannot be in themselves unlawful or displeasing to the Lord. If God himself did sometimes ordain forms of prayer, then forms of prayer must needs be esteemed valuable. If the chosen people, not sometimes only, but always, employed forms (for so far as we know they never were without them,—there is no evidence that they were), then forms of prayer, in the judgment of the impartial, must appear not merely valuable, but in all likelihood even necessary also.

It is objected, however, that forms are unsuited to the Christian dispensation.

But the New Testament Scriptures sanction forms.

For the Jewish saints are not condemned in them, as wanting in spirituality.

But perhaps it may be alleged (and this is the next step in the argument of objectors) that forms of prayer, however suited to the Jewish dispensation, which is said to have been essentially of a formal character, are by no means, therefore, to be esteemed suitable to the Christian dispensation, which is essentially spiritual.

This objection might be met, partly by the arguments employed above; but, in addition to these, the New Testament Scriptures, on examination, will be found fully to bear out the lawfulness and propriety of public forms of prayer.

In the first place, it must be confessed no hint is to be found in the New Testament Scriptures, that David and the Jewish saints were any ways wanting in spirituality of worship when they engaged in the use of public forms of prayer.

In the next place, it cannot be denied that the public worship of God in stated forms of prayer

⁵ Dr. Hammond, View of Directory; and Dr. Lightfoot. See Dean Comber, vol. v. page 29.

existed when the New Testament Scriptures were composed, and yet the existing forms are no where in those Scriptures abrogated or condemned. And is it credible that the existing custom, in a matter so important, was to be entirely done away, and yet that no command should be found in Scripture to that effect?

CHAP. II.

Neither are the ancient forms of worship abrogated.

But that which is alone sufficient to decide the lawfulness and advantage of the Jewish temple service, is the fact that it was attended by our blessed Lord himself. That He frequently took a part in this service we have the express testimony of the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, that He was never absent from it, when opportunity was afforded for his presence, and that He never, at any time, found fault with it for consisting of stated forms, we gather from the same source. For had He absented himself from the temple at the regular hours of worship, is it credible that He would have escaped the censure of his enemies, and the stigma of ungodliness, as despising prayer? And if, when He cast out the money-changers, and rebuked abuses in his Father's house, He had been offended by the use of forms of prayer, can it be supposed that He would have expressed no hint of his displeasure, or that, had He expressed any, it would not have been recorded? The formality of worshippers our Lord condemned repeatedly, but He found no fault at any time with forms of prayer themselves.

But our Lord himself frequented the temple service.

Nothing, then, in the conduct or the teaching of our Saviour inclines to the conclusion that forms of prayer, though suitable before his coming, were unsuitable when He had come; that the practice of the Jewish Church, in this respect, was to be resigned by the Church Christian. On the contrary, the conduct and the teaching of our Lord incline to the conclusion that this practice was to be continued. For when his disciples asked Him, saying,

And his teaching as well as conduct sanctioned forms of prayer;

CHAP. II.

in the instance of the Lord's Prayer,

“Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples,” it cannot be supposed that they knew not long before how to pray to God. And their meaning was, no doubt, ‘Lord, teach us a form of prayer by which we may be distinguished as thy disciples.’ Had it, then, been the design of Christ that forms of prayer should thenceforth cease, He would surely have instructed his disciples to that purpose. But He did not so. He gave them, on the contrary, a form of prayer, in which not only was the principle of forms in general entirely sanctioned, but even each petition, being taken (as learned men have shown⁶) from the then existing phrases of the Jewish Liturgy, conveyed a hint that He, who had the Spirit above measure, sanctioned not alone the use of forms, but even of those old forms which had been long in use, and that He was not gratified by the adoption of new phrases, or by the unpremeditated use of glowing words at random.

and in other instances.

The life of our blessed Lord affords other instances of his sanction given to the use of forms of prayer; but they occur at very solemn periods, and it is not necessary to insist upon them. Suffice it simply to mention, that the hymn which, in common with his disciples, He sung after partaking his Last Supper, before retiring to the Mount of Olives, cannot, from the nature of the case, be supposed an extemporaneous effusion; it was a form, and no doubt taken from the Psalms of David⁷.

The Apostles also followed our Lord's example.

The conduct of our Lord's Apostles is, of course, a comment upon his own. During his life, if He himself frequented the service of the Temple, doubtless the Apostles must have frequented it also. After his death, we read repeatedly of their pre-

⁶ Dr. Lightfoot on Matt. vi. 9, and others. See Dean Comber, vol. v. cap. i. p. 29.

⁷ The hymn usually sung by the Jews on that occasion was what they call the Great Hallel, consisting of the Psalms from cxiii. to cxviii. inclusive.

sence in the Temple. It is impossible to doubt, CHAP. II
 that they habitually used the Lord's Prayer; and
 nothing remains in the New Testament Scrip-
 tures to convince us that their worship in the con-
 gregation was, on principle, extemporaneous.

There is manifestly, then, no valid objection The testi-
mony of all
Scripture,
therefore, is
in favour of
forms, sanc-
tioning if
not com-
manding
them.
 against the lawfulness, or value, or necessity of
 forms of prayer in public worship, to be drawn
 from the conduct or the teaching either of saints
 in the Old Testament history, or of Christ and
 his apostles in the New. On the contrary, the
 use of forms has received, in all ages, the sanction
 of God's holy Word, if not by direct and positive
 command, yet by a continual succession of approved
 examples.

Those separate expressions of Holy Scripture Some pecu-
liar texts,
however,
have been
objected,
but per-
versely:
 which have been adduced so often by objectors as
 conclusive against forms of prayer, are sad pervers-
 ions of the meaning of the sacred words, and
 scarce demand a serious refutation. A few speci-
 mens may suffice to show their inapplicability to
 the point for which they are adduced.

Consider, for instance, that injunction of our Lord, e. g. Mark
xiii. 11;
 "Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak,
 neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be
 given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not
 ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." When this text
 is urged as an objection to the use of forms of
 prayer, it is altogether omitted that the hour de-
 scribed, in which it should be given them what they
 should speak, is not the hour of public worship, but
 the hour in which they should be "delivered up"
 by their enemies, and "brought before rulers and
 kings for Christ's sake." It is omitted that the gift
 of speech, here promised, was not designed to supply
 the prayers of Christians in the midst of friends, but
 only words for their defence, when challenged by
 their enemies. It was a special, not an ordinary, gift,
 bestowed to meet the exigencies of a peculiar season.

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CHAP. II.

and Rom.
viii. 26.

Another text, perverted in like manner from its true and obvious meaning by objectors to the use of forms of prayer, is found in the eighth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. There it is written, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." These words have been strained to imply that we know not how to offer prayers in the congregation as we ought, without immediate extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost on each occasion; and, consequently, that forms of prayer, composed beforehand and for all occasions, cannot be allowed. Whereas the "infirmities" spoken of by St. Paul, and the prayers which we "know not how to make as we ought," are infirmities and prayers when in some excessive trouble, and under temptation not to wait patiently God's season of deliverance, but to faint through weakness, or to ask relief when suffering would be more profitable for us. The intercession of the Spirit is, moreover, described as made "with groanings which cannot be uttered;" and cannot, therefore, have respect to the common prayers of assemblies of the Church on earth; but only to that indescribable, mysterious intercession for the Church of Christ, attributed to the Holy Ghost himself in heaven.

Many other
expressions
strained
also.

In truth, that whole series of expressions, so common in the mouths of objectors against forms of prayer, such as "praying with the Spirit," "quenching the Spirit," and others similar, when used as implying scriptural opposition to the use of forms, are so many perversions of the true meaning of the sacred Scriptures. For these phrases, when not applicable, as they are generally, to some miraculous or temporary gift, imply no more than praying heartily, with earnestness and devotion: and this can be done at least as well with forms of prayer

as without them; unless we will believe that David and all the fathers, our Lord himself and all his apostles, prayed without the Spirit, or quenched, or stinted, or offered hindrance to the Spirit, whenever they addressed their prayers in stated forms before Almighty God.

Neither in sober reason, then, nor in Holy Scripture, can any thing be found to countenance the modern system of extemporaneous prayers in the public worship of the Church of Christ, or to discountenance the ancient system of appointed forms. On the contrary, the practice of extemporaneous prayers in the congregation is found by the judgment of sound reason and pure conscience to produce the greatest dangers and most serious inconvenience both to minister and people. And no intimation is discernible, or has been maintained by its best advocates, of its having ever been commended or approved, or even allowed, in Holy Scripture. The use of stated forms, on the other hand, if judged by sound reason and pure conscience only, must be esteemed most reverent and suitable in the public worship of Almighty God. It was conceived lawful, and approved valuable, if not even believed necessary, in the best ages, and by the best men, under the dispensation of the Jewish law. It was sanctioned by the conduct and the teaching of our blessed Lord himself when He brought in the Gospel. It was not cast off, or any way discountenanced, by the holy Apostles of our Lord, so far as we can trace their judgment in the Scriptures which they have written. On the contrary, as we learn from subsequent history, it was adopted by them in their own practice, and ordained by them in all Christian Churches, from their earliest foundation; and it has been by all Christian Churches perpetuated to the present hour.

The conclusion from Holy Scripture.

CHAPTER III.

FORMS OF PRAYER USED IN THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH FROM THE BEGINNING.

“Go ye, and make disciples of all nations.....teaching them
to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

S. MATT. xxviii. 19, 20.

CHAP. III.

Forms of
prayer used
in the Ca-
tholic
Church
from the
beginning,

being
taught
orally by
the Apo-
stles,

although
not written
by them.

THE use of forms of prayer in public worship being so plainly sanctioned by the dictates of sound reason and the example of Holy Scripture, their adoption is to be expected in the Church of Christ from its earliest foundation: and antiquity bears witness that the use of known forms of prayer was, in fact, adopted in the Church of Christ, every where, at all times, and by all.

The Apostles were ordained by Christ himself to build his Church. Christians from the beginning to the end of time were to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded the Apostles, and the Apostles taught in the Church. Whatever therefore the Apostles taught in the Church Catholic as Apostles, became of divine and perpetual obligation; and they taught the use of premeditated forms of prayer. No Christian Church has yet been shown, since the day of the Apostles, which habitually used extemporaneous prayers in the congregation. The custom is of recent date, and peculiar to those who separate themselves from the Church; and it militates against the judgment of all ages: for a prescribed Liturgy appears to have been at all times used in the Catholic and apostolic Church from the beginning.

While the Apostles themselves remained on earth, they were occupied in planting Churches, chiefly

by word of mouth and by example. Those whom they converted in any place by preaching, they baptized, confirmed, admitted to the fellowship of breaking of bread, or partaking the Lord's Supper, and exhorted to continue instant in prayer. And then, having ordained bishops and deacons, to minister among them, they departed, leaving not written rules of conduct, but the remembrance of their own teaching. The apostolic Scriptures are not a formal body of instruction, but occasional Epistles, written upon particular emergencies, and embracing only such topics as those emergencies demanded. Unless, therefore, some doubt or dispute had arisen as to the use of forms of prayer in assemblies of the converts, it is not likely that any express command would be found on this subject in the apostolic Epistles. It is not, therefore, surprising, but agreeable to expectation, that the use of Liturgies, which the Church of Christ inherited from the Church of Israel, should not have been so distinctly enjoined in the writings of the Apostles as if it were a new thing. Nor can we wonder that the systematic use of extemporaneous prayers in the congregation, as the ordinary service, which was no where practised, should not have been expressly condemned, when it had no existence. That the Apostles used forms of prayer themselves, was shown in the last chapter. That any Christian Church was taught by them to use extemporaneous public prayers has never yet been shown. General precepts were delivered by an Apostle to "hold fast the form of sound words" which the converts "had heard of him¹;" and to "keep the traditions and ordinances which had been delivered to them, and taught, whether by word or epistle²;" and to "obey those that had the rule over them³," and who had "known

CHAP. III.

And express injunctions on the subject are not to be looked for in the apostolic Scriptures.

¹ 2 Tim. i. 13.² 1 Cor. xi. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 15.³ Heb. xiii. 17.

CHAP. III. his doctrine⁴," by personal instruction, themselves.

Such professing Christians as preferred following their own judgment, rather than apostolic teaching, were at that time put out from the communion of the Church. Heresy, though it vexed, did not then pollute the Christian Church. The views and practices of those who separated themselves, or opposed the doctrines and customs of the Church by contradictions of apostolic teaching, were solemnly condemned as false and dangerous. And under these circumstances it was not to be expected that any more particular account of the Liturgies in use among the primitive Christians should have found its way into the writings of the Apostles.

But very early Christian Liturgies have come down to us ;

which were in use before they were committed to writing,

as testified by Clement of Rome,

Although, however, the forms of prayer used in public worship by the first apostolic Churches have not come down to us written by the apostolic hands, yet forms of public prayer have come down to us, which were in use among the Churches at a period so early as to leave no doubt of their having substantially received the sanction of apostolic usage. Christian Liturgies were not at first committed to writing, but a substantial uniformity was preserved in them by memory and practice. There can be no doubt, from expressions dropped by various Christian writers, that during the first three centuries, forms of public prayer *existed* which those who had been baptized were accustomed to use in common. One writer, for instance, contemporary with the Apostles, that Clement whose name is recorded in Holy Scripture as "in the Book of Life⁵," writing within the first century from the birth of Christ, exhorts a disorderly Church to "do all things in order which the Lord hath commanded us to perform, and to let the oblations and services be celebrated at cer-

⁴ 2 Tim. iii. 10.

⁵ Phil. iv. 3.

tain or appointed times, and not rashly or disorderly:" and presently he adds, that "none of them (the bishops and priests) ought to swerve from the determined rule of his office or ministration⁶:" passages in which it is difficult to believe that the writer did not refer, among other ministrations, to that of offering public prayers in the Church.

Another writer, a martyr for the faith within fifty years after the death of St. John, gives an account of the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper in his day, and speaks of using "common prayers⁷," in a way which, one can hardly doubt, implies the use of some acknowledged form. And a third, who was Bishop of Jerusalem, has left us Catechetical Lectures⁸, containing such instructions to partakers of the Eucharist as can leave no question that a prescribed form was used in administering it in his time. Some features still retained in our own office are to be traced in his description. These are but a few of very numerous writers who might be cited to induce belief that forms of public prayer existed in the Church, although they were not published, so soon after the departure of the Apostles, that from the Apostles themselves they must have been derived, unless we will believe that the teaching of the Apostles was altogether forgotten, or indeed contradicted, in the Church, almost before the last of the Apostles had departed from the world.

And if it be still asked why, if forms of prayer existed, they were not at that time published; or how, unless they were committed to writing, they could be accurately retained; the answer is plain. For it must be remembered, first, that in the pri-

CHAP. III.

and by Justin Martyr,

and by St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

Why the Christian Liturgies were not written from the beginning.

⁶ Λειτουργίας. Clemens Rom. Epist. ad Cor. See Dean Comber, v. p. 46.

⁷ Justin Mart. Apol. i. c. 65. See Dean Comber, v. p. 54. See also Brett's Collection, 16.

⁸ Cyril. Catech. Mystag. Catech. See Dean Comber, v. p. 91—93. See also Brett's Collection, 17.

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mitive Church the ordinary service of the congregation was the communion of the Lord's Supper. And when it is considered that this service was performed, not, as among us, occasionally, but, where opportunity existed, daily, and at the least on every Sunday, so far as persecutions permitted, it will be acknowledged that both ministers and people could hardly fail to remember the accustomed forms, although they were not written. And the reason why they were not written is simply this; that the Church being at that time persecuted, and the faith contemned, the Liturgies of the Church were of necessity and on principle concealed⁹. Holding their assemblies in private houses at the peril of their lives, and exposed to the most calumnious reports as to the nature of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the early Christians were, of necessity, very circumspect in the publication of their mysteries; for to impart them to the faithless was considered a violation of Christ's command, by "giving holy things to dogs, and casting pearls before swine¹;" and not even those who were present at the previous common prayers and sermon, if they did not communicate, much less the heathen, were ever allowed to hear the words or be taught the doctrine of the Communion Service. It was called, indeed, the "Office of the Faithful," and it commenced invariably by the dismissal of all such as took no part in it. And when we consider that at that time the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was universally by the Church believed to have an effect not merely moral, but mysterious; that it was regarded not merely as an aid to spiritual improvement upon principles which we can understand, but in a way which we cannot understand as verily and indeed incorporating

They were
of necessity
and on prin-
ciple con-
cealed.

⁹ See Johnson's Unbloody Sacrifice, and Brett's Dissertation.

¹ Matt. vii. 6.

faithful penitent Christians with Christ, we may readily imagine how cautious Christians would be of revealing to the scorn of heathens and the derision of persecutors, doctrines so solemn, and mysteries (to those who did not believe) so utterly incomprehensible. Since even light-minded and lax Christians at this day are often found to scoff at the doctrine, that the bread and wine of the holy Supper do verily and indeed, upon consecration by the Word of God, become spiritually to the faithful the body and the blood of Christ; with what impious contempt may we suppose such doctrine would have been treated by the Antichristian world? This doctrine, and the Liturgies containing it, therefore, were at first purposely concealed from unbelievers. The Liturgies were not written, but delivered orally to those who partook in them. CHAP. III.

The circumstances, then, of the Church of Christ during its infancy were so different from our own, as to account for no written Liturgies of that period remaining to us.

In the early part of the fourth century, however, the emperor Constantine became Christian; the Church of Christ was countenanced by the powers of this world, and persecution ceased. From that time forth there is no doubt that written Liturgies were used in various branches of the Church. And this, of itself, is sufficient to prove that stated forms of prayer were from the beginning esteemed suitable to the Church established, if not to the Church when under persecution. From the cessation of persecution, however, there were written Liturgies.

Of Constantine himself it is recorded by his historian², “that he ordered his palace after the manner of one of the Churches of God; and when his family was assembled, he began to take ‘the books’ in his hands, and either expounded the Constantine.

² Eusebius, Life of Constantine, iv. 17; and see Dean Comber, v. 85.

CHAP. III. Holy Scriptures, or repeated the prescribed prayers to all that were in his court." And in his camp also Constantine "prepared a chapel, where they might sing hymns to God, and pray, and receive the mysteries; for there were priests and deacons with the army, who performed the order for these things, according to the law of the Church." Whence it is plain that, at this time, there were stated Liturgies and Service-books; but it is equally plain upon reflection, that there must have been stated Liturgies, though not written books, before this time. For why, otherwise, did Constantine establish them? who taught him to establish them? and why was he so taught? He was taught by those holy bishops who had survived previous persecutions. And they taught him thus, because they had themselves been thus taught by those who went before them; and those who went before them had been thus taught by their predecessors also. And so we ascend upwards, till it is found impossible to stop short at any time when the members of the Christian Church did not use Liturgies, which were believed to have taken their original from the tradition and order of the Apostles³.

From the council of Nice downwards, the use of written Liturgies is unquestionable.

Several of the earliest remain to us; bearing the names of St.

From the council of Nice downwards, it is not necessary to trace the history of Christian Liturgies, because there remains no longer any question of the fact, that written Liturgies were used universally in the Church of Christ. Several of the earliest still remain to us, mutilated indeed, or added to, by succeeding ages, yet evincing all a substantial agreement in every point of importance, and preserving evidently the main features of original apostolic ordinances. Of these, that called the Clementine is esteemed the earliest. Two bear the names of St. James and of St. Mark, not

³ Dean Comber, v. 152. 228, &c.

as professing to have been actually written by them, but as preserving, when written, what had before been handed down from the lips of the Evangelist and the Apostle. St. Chrysostom and St. Basil have given their names to others.

CHAP. III.

James, St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, and St. Basil.

These Liturgies contain the substance of the forms in use from the beginning in the Churches of Jerusalem, of Alexandria and Constantinople, of Rome and of Gaul. And from these, not from one common original, all existing Liturgies appear to have been derived⁴. For it was never held necessary that the forms and ceremonies of the Christian Church should be in all countries one and utterly alike. So long as in spirit and in essence they were one, in accidental particulars they might reasonably differ. The Apostles are not known to have delivered any one unalterable form for the use of the Church every where; and the bishops and pastors of each national Church have, consequently, enjoyed from the beginning the liberty of ordaining⁵ such rites and ceremonies as were most suitable to the peculiarities of its climate and its people. Only nothing would be lawfully ordained contrary to Holy Scripture, or to the well-known tradition of the Apostles.

And from them, all existing Liturgies seem to have been derived.

From this circumstance it has come to pass that at various periods the bishops and pastors in various countries have remodelled the Liturgies of their several Churches. And, in this manner, during some ages when purity of doctrine has failed, and evil men have been seated in places of authority, many corrupt additions have been made to the established forms of prayer: during other ages God has given the grace of truth to his people, and set righteous pastors over them, who have reformed the evil. It must not, therefore, be supposed, that there has been but one period of corruption in the

No one unalterable model having been ordained by the Apostles, successive bishops from the beginning have lawfully remodelled the Liturgies of their respective Churches.

⁴ Palmer, Orig. Liturg. Introduct. I. p. 5. 8.

⁵ Palmer, p. 186.

CHAP. III. Church, and but one period of reformation : that before the sixteenth century all was darkness ; since then, all light. During the darkest ages there were many flashes of light ; during the more enlightened, frequent occasional darkness. And our present English Liturgy must be regarded neither, on the one hand, as altogether derived from Rome ; nor yet, on the other hand, as dating altogether from the Reformation in the sixteenth century. It is not a new Service, but a revision of the old : whatever part of it was originally derived from Rome, was so derived before Rome became corrupt. In the English, as in other national Churches, forms of prayer have existed from the beginning ; some portions of which have been derived from other Churches, or shared with them ; and some have been our own. But a form of prayer in the congregation there has always been. Whether against our present Book of Common Prayer there lie any such insuperable objections as alone can justify a nonconformity or separation, will appear by a particular consideration of that Book. But such persons as refuse forms of prayer altogether in England, either on the plea that they are Romish, or that they are modern, do no less than reject the witness of the Holy Scriptures, the teaching of the inspired Apostles of Jesus Christ, the evidence of the earliest ages, and the consenting customs of the Universal Church.

Our own English Liturgy thus treated ;

having existed from the beginning, before Roman corruption, and being remodelled by our bishops in the 16th century.

CHAPTER IV.

A SKETCH OF THE LITURGY OF THE ENGLISH
CHURCH BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

“ Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations;
Ask thy father, and he will show thee;
Thy elders, and they will tell thee.”

DEUT. xxxii. 7.

¹ THE origin of British Christianity is uncertain. That a Church was established here during the lifetime of the Apostles, or not much later, there can be little doubt. But whether its first bishops were ordained by St. Paul, or by Gallican or Roman bishops, is not known. From whichever of these two countries Britain received her first bishops, doubtless she received her first Liturgy also. It is more probable that both were derived from Gaul than from Rome: for the Church of Lyons, we know, was ruled by bishops in the second century; and Lyons was nearer Britain than Rome was; and it was customary for settled Churches to labour the conversion chiefly of the nations nearest to them. We know, further, that the Gallican Liturgy was in certain points different from that of Rome²; and that the Liturgy which Augustine found in Britain, when he came to convert the Saxons, was also very distinguishable from that of Rome. Since, then, there is no trace of any more than these two primitive Liturgies in the Western Church, the Gallican and the Roman, if that which was found in Britain was contrary, in some of its customs, to that of Rome, it must, undoubtedly, have been derived from that of Gaul.

CHAP. IV.

The Original British Liturgy probably derived from Gaul.

¹ Palmer, Orig. Liturg. vol. i. lect. xi.

² Palmer; and Stillingfleet, Orig. Brit. p. 221. edit. Straker.

CHAP. IV.

Augustine
acknow-
ledged it to
be different
from that
of Rome ;

The³ address of Augustine, on his arrival, to those British bishops who had survived the Saxon persecution, was in the following terms :—" In many respects you act in a manner contrary to our customs, and, indeed, to those of the Universal Church. And yet, if you will obey me in these three things ;—to celebrate Easter at the proper time ; to perform the office of baptism, in which we are born again to God, according to the custom of the holy Roman and apostolical Church ; and with us to preach the word of God to the English nation ;—we will tolerate all your other customs, though contrary to our own." There had been, therefore, customs in the British Church, not drawn from any Roman source, before the coming of Augustine into Britain.

and intro-
duced that
of Rome to
the Saxons.

Yet the
Anglo-
Saxon Li-
turgy was
not derived
exclusively
from Rome ;

Augustine⁴, however, upon or after his arrival, no doubt introduced into England the Sacramentary of Gregory, bishop of Rome, by whom he had been sent into this country. And this Roman Sacramentary became the source, though not the exclusive source, of the Liturgies of the Saxon Church in England. That the Anglo-Saxon Liturgy was not drawn exclusively from Roman sources, we have the evidence of Gregory's instructions to Augustine on the subject. Among other questions upon which Augustine asked the advice of Gregory, one was,—"⁵ Since there was but one faith, why were there so many Liturgies ? and which of those that were then in use he should choose and establish for the Church in England ?" To which Gregory replied, " Your brotherhood knows the customs of the Roman Church, wherein you were brought up ; but I am content that whatever you can find in the Roman,

³ Bede, lib. ii. cap. 2. Godwin ; Collyer ; Stillingfleet ; Soames. Palmer, lect. xi. 178.

⁴ Palmer, Orig. Lit. lect. xi. vol. i. p. 185, 6. And a Sacramentary of St. Gregory, in Saxon, exists, which must have been written about the year 690. Comber, v. 224.

⁵ Bede and Spelman, in Comber, v. 209.

in the Gallican, or in any other Church, which may be acceptable to God, you do carefully choose that, and by a special institution infuse what you so gather from several Churches into your newly-converted Church of England. For things are not to be beloved for the place's sake, but places are to be beloved for the good things that are there. Wherefore, out of every Church choose such things as are pious, religious, and right; and putting all these together into one collection, deposit them for customs in the minds of the English." The English Liturgy, accordingly, was not derived, in any exclusive sense, from Rome, but from the existing primitive Liturgies of the Universal Church: and whatever portions of it were derived at this time from Rome expressly, were derived not from a Church corrupt, as Rome has since become, but well prepared to furnish what was good. And, supposing that the whole English Liturgy was, at this time, no other than a transcript of the Sacramentary of Gregory, yet Gregory himself did but compile and impose the forms known by his name, revising and correcting such as he found already existing in the Roman Church, as Gelasius and other bishops of that Church had done before him⁶. He did not invent a new Liturgy. To derive from him, therefore, was to derive not that which was his own originally, but that which he also previously had derived from the primitive and apostolic fountains of his Church. And as each bishop enjoyed from the beginning a power of making improvements in the Liturgy of his Church, that which Gregory and others had done at Rome, successive English bishops, in like manner, did in England. They altered, or made additions to, that Liturgy received upon the coming of Augustine into Britain. Thus, in process of time, different customs became established in the different dioceses of Eng-

but from
the ancient
apostolic
sources;

and gradu-
ally altered
and increas-
ed by suc-
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bishops in
their re-
spective
dioceses:

⁶ Comber, v. 178. 205—209.

CHAP. IV.

land, and varying Liturgies received the names of their respective Churches. Gradually arose the "Uses," as they were called, or Customs, of York, Sarum, Hereford, Bangor, Lincoln, and others⁷.

the original foundation, nevertheless, being preserved in all; though overlaid by corruptions until the sixteenth century:

at which period the corruptions were happily removed by the chief pastor of the Church;

and the English Liturgy restored in all things as nearly as possible to the ancient apostolic models.

The differences, however, in these various rituals were but small. In all fundamental points they were one. And before the sixteenth century unhappily they were all one in having adopted many grievously corrupt additions, which demanded careful and judicious correction. They remained all still written also in the Latin language, which was no longer understood by the common people; and the ignorance and superstition which prevailed were consequently very great. But the people, though ignorant and superstitious, retained still a foundation of sound doctrine; and the Liturgy of the English Church, though deformed with numerous unwarrantable additions, was nevertheless, in its main structure, what it had been from the beginning. Not a fundamentally new Liturgy therefore was needed, but a reformation of the old: a separation of the true from the false; of the holy from the profane. And the Archbishop of Canterbury, accordingly, in the exercise of that privilege which the chief bishop of each Christian Church had enjoyed from the beginning, revised the ritual books of the Church of England at that period, and re-edited them in English.

By examination of Holy Scripture, and the most ancient Liturgies of the Church, and by the light of such notice as the early Christian fathers have supplied, the ritual of England was restored in all things, as nearly as possible, to the primitive apostolic models. And, so restored, it was imposed by lawful authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, upon the people. Such, as regards the Liturgy, was the object and result of the English Reformation.

⁷ Palmer.

CHAPTER V.

THE REFORMATION OF THE LITURGY OF THE
ENGLISH CHURCH BEFORE THE REIGN OF
QUEEN MARY.

“ And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy
and profane ;

And cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”

EZEK. xliv. 23.

IT was a main object with the reformers of the Liturgy of the Church of England in the sixteenth century, to remove as few as possible of those prayers to which the Church in England had been accustomed for so many centuries. Every late corrupt addition they resolved, indeed, to do away ; but to adopt nothing new for the mere sake of novelty : rather to retain every thing old from reverence to its age, freeing it only from comparatively recent and unsound incumbrances. No resolution could be more wise or godly than this ; since in the Christian religion, contrary to human art or science, this general rule holds ever true, that what is old is right, and what is new is wrong. The result of that judicious discrimination which, by the help of God, the English reformers were enabled to use in revising the Liturgy is, that the prayers at this day offered in the English Church are for the most part the same as have been used in England for more than twelve hundred years¹ ; and in Rome and other Western Churches, from time immemorial.

CHAP. V.

The object of the English reformers was to retain that which was ancient ;

and they succeeded in so doing.

The two points to which the reformers necessarily directed their attention were the translation

¹ Palmer, book i. lect. xi. p. 189.

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K. Henry's
Primer, set
out A. D.
1535, con-
tained
prayers in
English.

And Arti-
cles of Reli-
gion, agreed
upon A. D.
1536, con-
demned se-
veral exist-
ing corrup-
tions.

The clergy
were also in
this year
enjoined to
declare the
power of the
Bishop of
Rome
usurped in
England.

A. D. 1537,
was pub-

of the ancient prayers from the Latin to the English language, and the removal of the corrupt traditions of recent ages. And to these ends it was necessary, as a first step, to instruct the people as to the nature of those errors into which they had been led, and to convince them of the necessity for their removal. Accordingly², the first distinct step, taken in the reign of King Henry VIII., towards the reformation of the existing Liturgy, was the publication of the "King's Primer," a book which contained a variety of treatises, and prayers in *English*, evincing a general disposition to cast off existing superstitions, and great boldness in spreading protests against them. This book passed through a variety of editions in the course of a very few years, and a large number of copies must have been dispersed throughout the kingdom.

In the following year Articles of Religion were agreed upon by the Convocation, and ordered by the king to be published, of which the design was to prevent diversity of opinion in matters both of faith and worship, and to establish unity and concord in the Church of England. These Articles condemned, either directly or by implication, several corrupt notions concerning the sacraments, the worship of saints and angels, the veneration of images, and the doctrine of purgatory.

In the same year, shortly after the publication of these Articles, Injunctions were promulgated, by which all persons were required carefully to adhere to the Articles, and the clergy were desired frequently to publish to the people that the power of the Bishop of Rome in England is usurped, and has no foundation either in the Word of God or the law of the land.

In the following year Archbishop Cranmer, with

² The authorities for this chapter are Wheatley, Shepherd, and Dr. Burton, from whose pages it has been drawn.

the assistance of other bishops, compiled a second English treatise of the same character with King Henry's Primer, which was afterwards approved by the King, and ratified by Parliament. It was called "The Bishop's Book ; or, the godly and pious Institution of a Christian man." In the exposition of the Creed, contained in this book, under the article 'Holy Catholic Church,' the Church of Rome was declared to be only *a part* of the Catholic Church, and its bishop to have no jurisdiction in the Churches of England, France, Spain, or any other foreign realm. A distinction was made, preferring baptism, the eucharist, and *penance*³, to the other rites which had previously been called sacraments. The Ten Commandments were divided as they now remain to us ; the second having been previously obscured. 'Ave Maria' was pronounced not to be *a prayer*. And while the antiquity of praying for the dead was maintained, the efficacy of papal pardons to deliver souls from penal suffering was protested against.

In this same year appeared a new edition of a translation of the Holy Bible into English ; of which Archbishop Cranmer said that the tidings of licensing it did him more good than the gift of ten thousand pounds. Royal Injunctions were also issued, commanding all incumbents to provide one of these Bibles, and to set it up publicly in the Church.

All things were thus tending gradually toward such an instruction of the popular mind as might make way for the necessary alterations in the Common Prayers, and for their publication in the English language. But in the ensuing year the temper of King Henry altered, and leave to read

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lished 'The Bishop's Book ;'

and a translation of the Holy Bible into English.

But the king in the year following, 1538, forbade it to be read.

³ The restriction of the name *Sacrament* to Baptism and the Lord's Supper was a step at which the reformers did not arrive till a later period.

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the Bible publicly was withdrawn by him through an Act of Parliament.

Abp. Cranmer opposed this change, but in vain.

By the Act of the Six Articles the old errors were restored.

Nevertheless, in the year 1539, appeared a Third Primer:

and a Litany, in English, in the year 1544, when King Henry again began to favour the Reformation.

But greater progress was made after the accession of K. Edward;

To this, and other following persecutions on the part of the royal and civil power, the archbishop offered the most courageous opposition. But although King Henry knew and valued his integrity, his opposition was for the time in vain. An Act of Parliament, called the Act of the Six Articles, restored, under the severest penalties, several of those erroneous doctrines, against which protest had been made previously with success. By it Archbishop Cranmer was obliged to separate himself from his wife, and Bishop Latimer was committed to the Tower.

The sufferings of these good men, however, advanced the truth. The next year (A. D. 1539) another Primer was set forth, called Bishop Hilsey's Primer, which, although it did not altogether satisfy Archbishop Cranmer, was yet instrumental in assisting the progress of general knowledge and of desire for reformation. And in the year 1544 a Litany in English was put forth by the authority of the king himself, who, having once more altered his opinions, in the year following set forth, together with his clergy, an improved edition of the Bishop's Book, to be taught, learned, and read, throughout all his dominions.

The steps, however, which the Archbishop was enabled to take in reforming the Liturgy of the English Church, during the reign of King Henry the Eighth, were very inconsiderable, compared with the great work accomplished in the short reign of his successor. The supremacy which had been in fact, though illegally⁴, exercised by the Bishop of Rome being transferred to the King of England, the English Church was, during the reign of Henry, too much dependent on the royal caprice; but on

⁴ See Blunt's Reformation, p. 51, or Statute of Merton, 20 H. III. cap. 9.

the accession of King Edward the Sixth, Archbishop Cranmer, no longer fettered by the undue opposition of regal power, proceeded with rapid steps to the completion of his purpose.

In the reign of King Edward the Sixth the first portion of that which became afterwards our English Prayer-Book was published. This was an Order of the Communion. It appeared in the year 1548, about a year after the king's accession, and was readily adopted by many of the clergy. But it was only a provision for the time: no rite or ceremony of the existing Latin Service being abolished by it, up to the point of time at which the priest received the Sacrament himself; but only an English service being superadded from that point, for administration of the Sacrament to the people. This English Service was, in its main features, similar to that which remains in use at present; but it contained much less than our present service; and a further progress in the reformation of existing forms was promised in its Preface. Necessity for time and caution was pleaded; and all the king's loving subjects were exhorted, "in the mean time to stay and quiet themselves with that direction, as men content to follow his authority (according to the bounden duty of subjects), and not enterprising to run afore, and so by their rashness become the greatest hinderers of such things, as they more arrogantly than godly would seem (by their own private authority) most hotly to set forward ⁵."

A few months later in the same year Archbishop Cranmer, with other bishops, received a commission to draw up in English a Book of Offices for the general use of the Church. Before the year closed this book was presented to the king, who received it with the highest satisfaction. It received also

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in whose reign was published the first part of that which became our English Prayer-Book, being an Order for the Communion.

And in A. D. 1548, Abp. Cranmer prepared a Book of Offices,

⁵ Proclamation prefixed to the Order of Communion.

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which came
into use on
Whitsun-
day 1549.

during the same year the civil sanction of the Parliament, which enacted that "the said Form of Common Prayer, and no other, should, after the feast of Pentecost next following, be used in all his Majesty's dominions." On Whitsunday 1549 the new Offices were adopted, commencing with the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, as an example to the kingdom. This book, commonly known as the First Book of King Edward the Sixth, contains the foundation of nearly all our present services.

This book,
called the
First Book
of K. Ed-
ward VI.,
restored
primitive
usages ;

It was compiled by purging out from the services already existing all late corrupt additions, and by restoring all things, as nearly as possible, to the model of the earliest and purest ages : and the English tongue was substituted in it for the Latin. No alteration was made for the sake of novelty, or to conciliate those who wished to innovate in all things, and were determined to be pleased with nothing which was not new. Neither, on the other hand, was any undue regard observed towards the weakness of those who were so unreasonably addicted to the ancient customs, that they made it a point of conscience not to depart even from any matter of ceremony.

yet was
not thought
to effect a
complete
reforma-
tion.

The book appears to have been considered, if not by the archbishop, yet by others, as a step only, though a very great one, towards a perfect reformation. The work was not yet esteemed complete ; but it was desirable by gradual progress to obtain the acquiescence of the people in all necessary changes more securely. So soon, therefore, as the prejudices arising against this First Book, from addiction to previous habits, had sufficiently subsided, and the English services had come into general use among the people, a public revision of the Liturgy was undertaken, and several additions and alterations made in it, with consent of the compilers, and by the advice of Peter Martyr, a learned Florentine, and of Martin Bucer, a Ger-

It was ac-
cordingly
revised ;

man Protestant, who had been recommended by Cranmer to professorships of divinity in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The Book, thus altered, commonly known by the name of King Edward's Second Book, was, like its predecessor, authorized by the Parliament early in the year 1552, and appointed to be used every where from the feast of All Saints following. And since that period, although the Book of Common Prayer has undergone several authorized examinations, but few alterations of moment have been made in the Common Prayers and Ceremonies of our Church. The changes from the First to the Second Book of King Edward were indeed, in more than one respect, considerable; and the question of their propriety has not ceased to occupy the attention of theologians to this day. There have been always, and probably always will be, in the Church, those who desire a further revision of the English Liturgy; some, that they may return more nearly to the previously existing model; others, that they may depart more widely from it. But even a personal preference for the First rather than the Second Book may at this day well consist with an unwillingness to attempt a change. Happy are they who content themselves with a humble devout use of the forms already provided for them; assured, on the one hand, that nothing found in them contradicts the pure word of God, or the mind of his Holy Spirit; and, on the other, that nothing in them is wanting which can be proved necessary to the edification or comfort of believers.

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and a Second Book authorized, A. D. 1552; since which time our Common Prayers have remained, substantially, unaltered.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REVISIONS OF THE ENGLISH LITURGY IN THE
REIGNS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, KING JAMES I.,
AND KING CHARLES II., WITH THE ATTEMPT IN
THE REIGN OF WILLIAM AND MARY.

"My son, fear thou the Lord and the king :
And meddle not with them that are given to change."
PROV. xxiv. 21.

CHAP. VI. THE reign of King Edward VI. saw a Liturgy in a tongue understood of the people, consistent with the directions of Holy Scripture, and conformed to the pattern of the primitive Christian Church, compiled by those to whom God had given authority to "set in order things that were wanting," and accepted by the King and Parliament on behalf of the English nation; whom it was their office under God to represent and govern. But it did not please God to allow to those whom He employed as instruments in this memorable labour the earthly enjoyment of its fruits. The young king was called away by an early death. The aged prelates were consigned to exile or to martyrdom by his successor. The reign of Queen Mary set aside the use of the Reformed Prayer-Book; and Queen Elizabeth on her accession found the sees again occupied by bishops attached to the ancient errors, and unwilling to acquiesce in the restoration of the English Liturgy. That it should be restored by Convocation, from which the Protestant Clergy had been banished by the Marian persecutions, was therefore a vain hope. And, as the only ex-

The Re-
formed Li-
turgy of K.
Edward set
aside by
Q. Mary;

but restored
by Queen
Elizabeth.

pedient practicable under circumstances of great difficulty, certain learned divines were commissioned to prepare a Book of Common Prayer, to be presented by the Queen to Parliament for its acceptance. They accordingly entered upon a review of the second book of King Edward, and completed it in the early part of the year 1559. And a public Conference having been held at Westminster between several of the Marian Bishops and an equal number of Protestant divines; at which the former party failed to fulfil the conditions arranged for the discussion, and the arguments of the latter in favour of a Liturgy *in English* prevailed to the thorough satisfaction of the audience; a Bill for Uniformity in the service of the Church, authorizing King Edward's Book of Common Prayer with a few alterations and additions, was introduced into Parliament, and with scarcely any amendment passed readily.

In this book the alterations of moment were few; being chiefly such changes of expression in the Litany and Communion Service, concerning the Bishop of Rome, and the doctrine of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, as were likely to remove all just cause of separation from those persons who in their hearts adhered still to the old forms. The additions were valuable; consisting chiefly of the Prayers for the Queen's Majesty, and for the Clergy and people, and of the Table of proper first Lessons for Sundays, which had been read hitherto according to the order of the Calendar. Some of the ornaments of ministers and churches, enjoined in the first book of King Edward, but disallowed in the second, were also again at this time enjoined. And the whole work was so carefully adapted to soothe the offence of that party most opposed to it, that for ten years¹ those members of the English Church who still

The additions and alterations made under Queen Elizabeth.

The conformity of the whole nation.

¹ See Shepherd, *Introduc.* lxiv.

CHAP. VI. maintained the supremacy of the Roman Bishop, and preferred that ancient form of Liturgy which preceded the Reformation, were nevertheless content to conform to the Reformed Liturgy, and to communicate with the Reformed Church, rather than withdraw schismatically to separate congregations. Even the Pope himself offered to confirm the English Liturgy². And this, notwithstanding that the Marian Bishops, with one exception³, refusing to take the oath of the Queen's supremacy, were deprived, and their places filled by such of the Bishops previously ejected by Queen Mary as survived the persecution, and by other divines favourable to Ecclesiastical Reformation. The use of the Reformed Prayer-Book became thus generally established, and all parties throughout the kingdom for the most part conformed to it.

Romanists
not the only
dissenting
party, but
Puritans
also.

The adherents of Rome, however, were not the only party who conformed without affection. The spirit of reformation in many degenerated into a licentious love of novelty; and from disallowing the authority of the Bishop of Rome in England, too many advanced into a disaffection towards the whole scheme of government by Bishops, and became dissatisfied with the establishment of the most simple rites and ceremonies. From their affecting greater purity in the worship of God than that which they conceived to be practicable under the regulations of the Book of Common Prayer these persons were called Puritans. Like the Romish party, they also conformed, in spite of their disaffection, to the Book of Common Prayer, and communicated with the Church during the first ten years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. But in the eleventh year of that reign the Romish party in England, excited by a Bull from the Pope,

² Strype's Reformation, ch. 19, p. 220.

³ Dr. Anthony Kitchin, Bishop of Llandaff. Collier; Godwin.

withdrew⁴. And shortly after the schism caused by the withdrawal of the Romish party, the Puritans withdrew also from the Church of England, and formed separate congregations among themselves. During the reign of Elizabeth, however, though advancing in numbers and influence, the Puritan party were confined within bounds; and though declaiming constantly against the Book of Common Prayer, they remained hopeless of procuring its rejection, or what they would have deemed its necessary improvement. CHAP. VI.

But on the accession of King James I. they were led to take open measures for obtaining at his hands the gratification of their desire. A petition was presented by them to the monarch, in which they complained of the service, government, and discipline of the Church of England; and solicited to be heard in a Conference among the learned before the King. This petition, professing to be signed by a thousand ministers adverse to existing customs of the Church, was called the Millenary⁵ Petition. And the chief scandals which the petitioners requested to see removed from the Book of Common Prayer, or amended in it, were the following: The use of the cross in Baptism, and of the ring in Marriage; the wearing of the cap and surplice; and the reading of the lessons from the Apocrypha. Lay Baptism, and Confirmation as superfluous, were required to be taken away. The “longsomeness” of the service was complained of, and it was desired that no ministers should be charged to teach their people to bow at the name of Jesus⁶. The Puritan objections on the accession of K. James I.

⁷ The two universities of Oxford and Cambridge felt the propositions of the Puritans to involve so great risk of dangerous or idle changes, that they sent forth a paper replying one by one to the The universities reply to them.

⁴ Soames, Eliz. Relig. Hist. 121. 128.

⁶ See Cardwell's Conferences.

⁵ See Shepherd.

⁷ Cardwell.

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complaints of the petitioners. And the King had already seen enough of the Puritans in Scotland to render him very unwilling to yield to their demands. Their⁸ clamorous and seditious conduct added to this unwillingness. Yet, though esteeming their objections invalid, he determined to give them a hearing. "We are persuaded," he said, "that both the constitution and doctrine of the Church of England is agreeable to God's word, and near to the condition of the Primitive Church; yet forasmuch as experience doth show daily that the Church militant is never so well constituted in any form of policy, but that the imperfections of men who have the exercise thereof do with time, though insensibly, bring in some corruption; as also for that informations were daily brought unto us by divers that some things used in this Church were both scandalous to many seeming zealous, and gave advantage to the adversaries; we conceived that no subject could be so fit for us to show our thankfulness to God, as upon serious examination of the state of this Church, to redeem it from such scandals as, both by the one side and the other, were laid upon it⁹."

And the King appoints a conference at Hampton Court.

A conference accordingly was appointed to be held before the King at Hampton Court, between certain of the Bishops and Clergy on the one part, and select representatives of the nonconforming party on the other. This conference met on the 14th day of January, in the year 1604, and was continued for three days; during which arguments were both used by the King himself, and heard by him, on both sides. "He pleaded to have good proof against the ceremonies to which objection was made by the Puritans; and if they had either the word of God against them, or good authority, he consented to their removal; but if

⁸ Cardwell.

⁹ Proclamation by King James I., Oct. 24, 1603. See Cardwell.

they had no word of God against them, but all authority for them, being already in the Church, he said he would never take them away; for he came not to disturb the state, nor to make innovations, but to confirm whatever he found lawfully established, and to amend and correct what was corrupted by time¹."

As the arguments of the Bishops in favour of the existing ceremonies, both from God's word, and from the authority of the Church, were unanswerable, no alteration of moment in the points complained of was conceded to the scruples of the Puritan party. But, weak as were the reasonings of the nonconformist disputants upon these points, and captious and undeserving of attention as was the great body of their adherents, the disputants themselves were many of them men of learning, zeal, and piety; and other points which they suggested met with due consideration from the King and Bishops. One uniform translation of the Bible, to be used throughout the realm, was agreed upon, and a new edition undertaken accordingly; and *additions* to the Book of Common Prayer also resulted from this Conference, which must doubtless be esteemed valuable. Such were, for instance, in the Morning and Evening Prayer a Collect, and in the Litany a particular intercession, for the royal family; and more particularly, the forms of Thanksgiving upon various occasions at the end of the Litany, and the questions and answers concerning the Sacraments at the end of the Catechism. The chief *alterations* related to the services of Private Baptism and Confirmation; in the latter of which the title was enlarged and rendered more explicit; in the former, an existing rubric, countenancing lay-baptism, was so changed as to restrict the administration of that sacrament to the "lawful

¹ Dr. Montague's Narrative. Cardwell.

CHAP. VI. minister;" whosoever else should baptize being held an intruder into the sacred function.

The Liturgy as revised at Hampton Court not formally submitted to Convocation or to Parliament;

The alterations and additions made at this Conference in the Book of Common Prayer were not submitted by the King to the Convocation or to Parliament². The Sovereign himself provided for the publication of the Liturgy in its new condition, and enjoined its usage in the churches. The main body of the book, however, thus enjoined, was the same with that prepared in King Edward's reign by the Bishops, who, according to God's word, are the lawful teachers and rulers of Christ's flock in all things spiritual. And even the altered portions and additions, though enjoined by the direct authority of the King alone, had virtually received the assent of the Bishops present at the Conference, and so came recommended to the Church by the sanction of her Pastors. Perhaps, therefore, the course taken by the King was no transgression of the limits assigned in Scripture to the spiritual authority of sovereigns. But certainly his course affords no plea to any one at this day for rejecting the Book of Common Prayer as unlawfully or imperfectly enjoined upon the Church; because the Book of Common Prayer enjoined by King James I. without submission to the Convocation and Parliament was, as we shall see presently³, adopted with additions by the Convocation in the reign of King Charles II., and received by the Parliament, and enjoined by the King, as presented to them by the Spiritual Pastors of the Church. And these remarks apply equally to any irregularity of proceeding into which, from the pressure of unexampled difficulties, Queen Elizabeth at the opening of her reign had been previously driven.

but not therefore the less binding upon us at present.

The rectitude of

The wisdom manifested by King James in his disinclination to abolish or change the Ceremonies

² Cardwell.

³ See page 61, 62.

of the Church in compliance with the scruples of the Puritans became but too sadly clear during the reign of his son and successor. The shocking fanaticism in which these scruples issued, and the wicked rebellion of the scrupulous party, or of their disciples and descendants, terminated by the atrocious murder of their sovereign, made it before many years plain to all the world to what results a rejection of the divine government of Bishops had tended.

CHAP. VI.

K. James's
prejudice
against the
Puritans as
seen in their
after con-
duct.

At the opening of the reign of King Charles I. no particular attempt was made, as in former reigns, to improve the Liturgy. New editions were printed from the amended copy of the preceding reign, with alteration of the names of the King and royal family⁴. And the beginnings of those troubles which followed were seen, as respects the Book of Common Prayer, not in any fresh attempt at revision, but, in Scotland, in the violent rejection by the presbyterian party of a reformed Liturgy prepared for them; in England, in unjust accusations against Archbishop Laud, of interpolating the Prayer-Book; and also in the appointment, by the House of Lords, of a Committee, to "take into consideration all innovations in the Church respecting religion⁵."

No revision
of the Li-
turgy upon
the acces-
sion of K.
Charles I.

This Committee, appointed early in the year 1641, with a view of suggesting such measures as might tend to allay the discontent of objectors, found before many months that such motions were entertained in the House of Commons as left no doubt of the impending ruin of the Church. Their undertaking, therefore, was abandoned; but not before it had become known, that from deference to the objectors, or from desire of concord, the Committee were ready to sanction very many changes. And although these changes, on account of the events which followed, were not car-

The ill
effect of the
House of
Lords'
Committee
on religion.

⁴ Shepherd.⁵ Cardwell.

CHAP. VI.

ried into effect; yet the known readiness of the Committee (containing among it prelates of the highest learning and piety⁶;) to yield such changes, afforded an ill precedent to the remonstrants of later days, who, when their petitions for change had been rejected, were enabled to plead that points were then refused to them which many had been willing to concede before. So fatal and unavailing is the effort to conciliate by concession those who oppose themselves unreasonably to authority. To give up outworks in the hope of saving a citadel is a course into which, in things pertaining to religion, one should think no good and sound men could ever be betrayed, were it not for the exceeding power of the temptation to sacrifice truth for the sake of peace. To labour for peace by self-sacrifice is a Christian duty; but to aim at securing peace by the sacrifice of truth is a weakness or a transgression. Amiable as is the virtue of a due readiness to yield, a due firmness to maintain is not less noble, or less necessary to the perfection of Christian character. It is an error to think that an inflexible maintenance of what is right is inconsistent with the grace of Christian humility.

The Re-
bellion.

But there are times which overpower the courage of the true-hearted. And these were such. For a season it was given to the enemies of the Church to triumph; and that which the Bishops and pastors could not yield was seized with violence by the misguided people. On the 3rd of January, 1645, an ordinance was passed by the Parliament, which provided that the Book of Common Prayer should not remain, or be used, thenceforth in any church, chapel, or place of public worship in England or Wales; and that the Directory (the form of public worship

⁶ Bishops Moreton and Montague, and Archbishop Usher.

ordained by the rebellious party) should be used instead of it⁷. By another ordinance in the same year the use of the Book of Common Prayer was also forbidden in any *private* place or family; all copies of it to be found in the churches were ordered to be delivered up; and heavy penalties were imposed upon those who offended by retaining it⁸. So great was the intolerance of those who demanded toleration! To such extent proceeded the tyranny of those who resisted the powers set over them by God on a plea of liberty!

The licentiousness, however, which followed in the public worship; the insolence of those who, refusing to be governed by Bishops, had taken upon themselves to govern; and the bloodshed, anarchy, and confusion consequent upon resistance to a lawful sovereign, shortly attained to so great height, that the nation became desirous, at any price, of returning once more to the old and good way; of restoring once more their King, and Bishops, and Liturgy. Even the leaders of the presbyterian party themselves (who had been active in throwing off episcopal government), declared themselves no longer enemies of a moderate episcopacy; but modestly desirous of such alterations only in it, and in the Church's Liturgy, as "without shaking foundations, might best allay the present distempers, which the indisposition of the time, and the tenderness of some men's consciences, had contracted⁹."

Amid the prevalence of such sentiments King 1660.
Charles II., the son of a martyred father, was restored from banishment to his seat on the throne of England. And now the same men who before the King's return had declared themselves desirous of such alterations only in the English

⁷ Cardwell.⁸ Cardwell.⁹ King Charles II.'s Declaration. Cardwell.

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Liturgy as affected not its foundation, soon ventured in private audiences of their Sovereign to suggest, "that the use of the Book of Common Prayer having been long discontinued, many of the people had never heard of it, but had become familiar with an opposite mode of worship; and that it would be a course acceptable to the wishes of the nation, if the use of the Liturgy in strict form were abstained from in the royal chapel¹." To this the King replied with some warmth, as with the greatest justice, that "whilst he gave them liberty, he would not consent to have his own taken away." Then they besought him with importunity, "that the use of the surplice might be discontinued by the royal chaplains, because the sight of it would give offence and scandal to the people, who were unaccustomed to it." But the King told them, "that it had been always held a decent habit in the Church, constantly practised in England till those late ill times; and that though he was bound for the time to tolerate much disorder and indecency in the exercise of God's worship among others, yet by his own practice he would never in the least degree discountenance the good old order of the Church in which he had been bred²."

The King's
firmness.

The Liturgy
restored
by him.

Thus had those men, who had themselves unlawfully abolished customs which were right, the assurance to plead that abolishment as a reason against their lawful restoration. But the day in which it had been permitted to them to prevail was over. Immediately after the return of the King the Liturgy of the Church of England was restored to His Majesty's chapel; and a few days afterwards the two houses of Parliament ordered that prayers should be read in their

¹ Cardwell.

² Idem.

assembly according to the ancient practice³. The nine Bishops who survived the rebellion were speedily reinstated in the sees which had been usurped; six others were soon after consecrated; and in a short time the Church of England, which for fourteen years had been trodden down by ungrateful children, resumed her wonted form and government; and the sounds of her Liturgy, for so long a period banished by the rude voices of the presumptuous and fanatical, were, to the inexpressible joy of all right-minded men, soon once more heard within the courts of the Lord's sanctuary.

Although determined, however, to maintain episcopacy and the use of the English Liturgy in his kingdom, the King could not refuse to the power and numbers of the opposing party the same privilege of a hearing which had been allowed on former occasions. The chief men among the Presbyterians in London⁴ accordingly agreed upon a paper to be presented to the King, in which they declared⁵, that they were satisfied in their judgments concerning the lawfulness of a Liturgy or form of worship, (a point which by their predecessors the Puritans had been denied in the days of Queen Elizabeth,) only they expressed the old objections against the length of the existing Liturgy and against its method; and requested that by a Conference of learned divines of opposite sentiments it might be amended and improved. Concerning Ceremonies also they declared, that they held themselves obliged in every part of divine worship to do all things decently, and in order, and to edification; and that they were willing to be determined by authority in such things as, being merely circumstantial or common to human

The King nevertheless gives ear to presbyterian remonstrances.

³ Cardwell.

⁴ Reynolds, Worth, and Calamy.

⁵ Neal's Puritans. Cardwell.

CHAP. VI.

actions and societies, are to be ordered by the light of nature and human prudence. Nevertheless, they plainly intimated their dislike of the Ceremonies retained in the Church of England, and their opinion that the worship of God would be more pure and perfect without them; and they prayed that several Ceremonies in particular, against which they had of old objected, as the use of the cross and ring, and of bowing at the name of Jesus, with others similar, might for the future be abolished.

To which
the Bishops
formally
reply.

To this paper the Bishops laid a reply before the King, answering successively the several objections. The offices in the Common Prayer-Book they pronounced altogether unexceptionable; and they expressed their conviction that the book could not be too strictly enjoined. As to the Ceremonies objected to, they declared themselves unwilling to part with any of them; being clearly of opinion, that the satisfaction of some private persons ought not to overrule the public peace and uniformity of the Church; and that if any abatements were made, it would only feed a distemper, and encourage unquiet people to further demands. Notwithstanding, they avowed themselves content to yield that the Liturgy should be reviewed in case the King thought fit⁶.

And the
King grants
a confer-
ence.

Upon this a conference, for the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, of divines selected equally from the opposing parties, was appointed to be held at the Savoy, of which the Bishop of London was Master. This was early in the year 1661; and the consultation which then took place has been since known by the name of the Savoy Conference.

The Savoy
Conference
futile.

At this Conference, however, as at those of Westminster and Hampton Court which preceded

⁶ Collier.

it, the superiority of the Book of Common Prayer, and of its defenders over those opposed to them, became only more manifest. The Presbyterians evinced a disposition to find fault with trifles, and to dispute about things unimportant and indifferent. The exceptions urged by them against the existing Liturgy were for the most part either frivolous, or such as struck at the root of some ancient laudable practice or catholic doctrine⁷. And in the place of necessary additions to the Liturgy, one of them, Richard Baxter, produced an entirely new form of prayers framed by himself alone, without any regard to primitive models, which he proposed to the Bishops for adoption in the Church. This service was professedly drawn up in Scriptural phrase; that is, thirty or forty, and sometimes three or four score detached sentences, or at least scraps of sentences, of Holy Scripture were, without much regard to affinity or connexion, jumbled together in one prayer⁸. Thus it became evident that the professions of the Presbyterian party, that they desired only such moderate alterations in the existing Prayer-Book as consisted with its fundamental preservation, were a pretext merely; and that their real object was indeed nothing less than the entire subversion of the ancient form of worship, and the substitution of their own devices in its stead. The Bishops, therefore, were justly inflexible in resisting an innovation so little to be endured; and the period to which the Conference had been limited having expired⁹, it terminated without union or accommodation between the parties.

Meantime, the Convocation had met; and the Bishops and Clergy, having adopted such proposed alterations as were reasonable, and made

CHAP. VI.

Convocation prepare an amended Book of Common Prayer,

⁷ Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

⁸ Shepherd.

⁹ The commission was limited to four months.

CHAP. VI. some concessions to the Presbyterians, and introduced some additions to the Book of Common Prayer as it existed in the reign of King James (from the year 1604), subscribed the amended book, prefixed to it a new preface (in which they declared the alterations to which they had consented to have been made out of consideration for others, not from their own sense of a necessity for alterations), and presented it, appended to the Act of Uniformity, for the civil sanction of the King and Parliament. The sanction of Parliament was given speedily; its members happily deciding to adopt without examination the amendments made in Convocation. The royal assent followed, May 19th, 1662; upon which the Book of Common Prayer became lawfully enjoined, both by ecclesiastical and civil authority, upon the Church of England.

which is
accepted by
the King
and Parlia-
ment.

The addi-
tions made
in it.

The alterations and additions made by Convocation at this period are too numerous to be considered in detail. As on previous reviews, the additions were of chief value. That which had been from the beginning was capable of little or no improvement. Among the additions, however, were the Form of General Thanksgiving appended to the Litany; a new office of Baptism for those of riper years (rendered necessary by the growth of anabaptism during the late rebellion¹); the Forms of Prayer to be used at sea; for the Martyrdom of King Charles I.; and for the Restoration of the Royal Family.

At this time, by various and successive reviews, the English Liturgy had attained to a state which, at least as regards its substance, may justly be considered bordering on perfection. At the desire of opposite parties it had been three times solemnly reconsidered since its compilation in the reign of King Edward VI., and upon each

¹ See Preface to Book of Common Prayer.

occasion it had been altered and enlarged, with every desire to conciliate, by all reasonable concession, adherents of Rome in the reign of Elizabeth, Puritans in that of James, and Presbyterians in that of Charles. Further revision might, therefore, reasonably have been deemed unnecessary. But there was still a desire so to mould the formularies of the Church, as to comprehend within her pale those whose principles necessarily inclined them to cavillings and separation. The tendency to such a design of comprehension was considerably increased by the avowed inclination of King James II. to Rome (which had the effect of drawing closer together all who protested against Rome by a sense of common danger), and by the circumstances under which William of Orange attained the crown of England. The rights of an hereditary throne, and the oath already taken for its support, were considerations which pressed heavily and painfully on the minds of great numbers of Churchmen, and prevented them from acknowledging the authority of William. But these considerations were of little weight in the estimation of dissenters, whose notions of government, whether in Church or State, were laid on a different foundation². It was natural, therefore, that a sovereign under William's circumstances, depending for his crown upon the will of the people, should conciliate the regard of nonconformists, and endeavour, though at some sacrifice to the Church, to retain the services of those whose want of submission to the Church's principles was the very reason why they could support him without scruple in his pretensions to the kingdom.

Many Churchmen, however, were far from backward to support the claims of William, and to

CHAP. VI.

Further revision at that time unnecessary.

The scheme of comprehension favoured by K. James's Popery,

and by the revolutionary principles of the Prince of Orange,

which found fa-

² Cardwell.

CHAP. VI.

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with many
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The com-
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The pro-
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unite with separatists from the Church in their defence. In the early part of his reign accordingly, at the suggestion of Tillotson, a commission was issued to the most eminent of the clergy, authorizing and requiring them to prepare such alterations of the Liturgy, and consult on such other matters, as in their judgments might most conduce to the edification and union of the Church, and to the reconciling as much as possible all differences. By these commissioners, who met in the Jerusalem Chamber³, A. D. 1688, alterations were agreed on and submitted to a Convocation. But Convocation could not be prevailed on to adopt them; and they were in consequence resigned.

Without pretending to maintain that no alterations whatever were at this time necessary in the Book of Common Prayer, or that none of those proposed were in themselves desirable; without maintaining that no attempt should have been made to remove the scruples of such as pleaded conscience for nonconformity, or that no good men were engaged in this attempt to remove them; it can scarcely be thought that all the proposed alterations if adopted, or indeed any alterations, would have secured the object for which they were made, in reconciling the objectors. Experience had sufficiently proved that the spirit from which the objections sprung was one which defied attempts at reconciliation; and the sacrifice of all the Ceremonies of the Church (which was not thought at this time a concession too large), had it availed to conciliate a few opponents, could not have failed to alienate more friends, and so to create still further causes of disunion by the very means adopted to remove them.

The Act of

As no attempt at alteration of the Book of Com-

³ Bishop Patrick. Cardwell.

mon Prayer has been successful since the revision in the reign of King Charles II., the book revised and amended by the Convocation of 1661 stands confirmed and ratified by the civil sanction of Parliament at this day.

CHAP. VI.

K. Charles II. binding upon us at present.

Since the failure at the Revolution, however, further projects of alteration have not ceased to be entertained. One formal petition, in particular, for a fresh revision was made to Archbishop Cornwallis in the year 1772, but was rejected by him after consultation with the Bishops severally. Whether any further alterations, if practicable, should by sober men be deemed necessary or desirable, the history of the past may sufficiently enable us to decide. That any alteration should be deemed necessary in the main structure of a Liturgy which in its chief parts is known to be coeval with the first ages of Christianity, is impossible, until it can be maintained that the very principles of Christianity themselves were designed to change, and shape themselves to accordance with the fluctuations of human wishes and opinions. Whether any modification of Liturgical directions, or of customs and ceremonies in themselves indifferent, be now desirable, may admit a question. But we shall be wise, in resolving such a question, not to forget the lessons of experience; to remember that every attempt at alteration, arising merely from desire to conciliate those who opposed themselves, has resulted hitherto in additional conviction, that by no concessions which the Church can make is it possible that those who have alienated themselves from her should be satisfactorily regained.

Projects of alteration entertained since the Revolution, but rejected.

CHAPTER VII.

RECAPITULATION.

THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF ENGLISH
CHRISTIANS.

“Obey them that have the rule over you,
And submit yourselves.”

HEB. xiii. 17.

CHAP. VII. IN the foregoing chapters it is hoped that sufficient answers may be found to the most prevalent general objections against the English Common Prayer Book.

It is now unhappily too common to hear objections against forms of prayer, as novel, corrupt, superstitious, contrary to the spirit of Scripture, and deadening to the fervour of devotion. And the English forms of Common Prayer, in particular, are often called Popish, or Parliamentary, and considered either burdensome or unprofitable. On this account not only are many led away altogether openly to dissent from, and refuse communion with, the Church in England, but many also, who professedly adhere to her communion, are shaken or disquieted by doubts in their adherence; and faith and zeal are chilled by inability to find replies to shallow and unsound, but plausible, objections. But while the evil of cold friends within is one far greater than that of foes without the Church, it is hoped that in some respects it may prove an evil more capable of cure. Little expectation may be entertained of altering the wrong course of such as have once resigned themselves wilfully to schismatical opposition; but much of confirming in the right such weak and wavering

members of the Church as want not inclination, CHAP. VII.
 but plain direction and assistance only, to enable
 them to withstand the specious arguments of
 seducers.

Let such, then, consider whether it has not appeared in the foregoing pages, that the use of prescribed forms of prayer in the public worship of the Church is so far from being unreasonable, unscriptural, or unprofitable, that it receives the fullest sanction both of natural reason and of the word of God, and tends manifestly to the glory of God Almighty, and the edification of his people. The practice is found among nations left to follow the dictates of natural religion; it prevailed in the Church of God when confined within the nation of Israel; it was adopted thence into the Church enlarged and laid open by Jesus Christ to the admission of all nations. In every particular branch of the Church Catholic planted by the first Apostles of Christ we cannot doubt this custom was received: it has continued in all from the beginning to this day. The contrary practice, of extemporaneous public prayers, is a mere novelty; a presumptuous fancy of individuals in evil days, based on no sound warrant of the Holy Scripture, and in its own nature tending to confusion.

Some forms of Common Prayer are needful in the Church; and our first forms contained the essence of what the earliest Christian pastors had deemed profitable to the edification of all the Churches. These forms were for many centuries in use in a language not understood by the common people; and they also became contaminated with many lamentable corruptions. But the time arrived when, in the course of his providence, God gave to English Bishops grace and power to purify the Church from these corruptions. The old Latin prayers were translated into English, that men

The necessity of some forms of prayer, and the excellency of the English forms.

CHAP. VII. might pray not with the heart only, but with the understanding also. Corrupt additions, the growth of years, were severed from the originally pure stock on which they had been grafted. The objections of all wise and pious men were heard and answered. The chief pastors of our Church, to whom God gave authority to teach, provided gradually such additions as were needful, rejecting with equal impartiality the glosses of the late Roman Church, and of new sects in their own country; keeping close in all things to the voice of the Apostles, as heard and witnessed by the primitive universal Church. The forms which they had thus provided English Bishops and clergy presented to successive sovereigns and parliaments, to be by them received and sanctioned by civil laws on behalf of the lay people.

Thus by God's providence has the English Liturgy been preserved from opposite extremes of error, and enjoined by lawful exercise both of ecclesiastical and civil power. The king and the priest, by virtue of that authority by God committed to them, consented in binding its observance upon the people; and the people also consented in binding it upon themselves. Our Book of Common Prayer is free equally from superstition and from licentiousness; and its injunction upon us was accomplished without tyranny of rulers either spiritual or temporal. It is not Popish; for it is older than Popery: it is not Parliamentary (in the sense in which it has been so called); for the very Act of Parliament which approves and confirms it by civil penalties, declares that it was framed and presented to the King and Parliament by the Bishops and the Clergy¹.

It is not, as a form, deadening to the aspirations of a devout soul; for our Lord himself and all

¹ Act of Uniformity, 14 Car. II.

saints have used forms of prayer from the beginning. Neither is it an hindrance to the effusion of God's Holy Spirit; for that Spirit has been at no time more plentifully poured out upon the Church, than when its forms of prayer have been most heartily observed. CHAP. VII.

But the foundation of our Liturgy was laid by inspired Apostles and by holy Martyrs; its superstructure was raised by godly Bishops and true pastors of the Church. It is enjoined upon us by the authority of their successors, to whom Christ gave commission to teach all nations; and it has been sanctioned by kings, and by all that bear rule over us, according to God's ordinance, in this kingdom: it is ancient, yet uncorrupt; catholic, and yet reformed; sober without coldness; and regular without formality. In a word, if it is not perfect, it is at least unobjectionable, and perhaps as near perfection as human infirmity may look to come; and if it is not sufficient for the edification and comfort of the faithful, there is no Liturgy upon earth sufficient for them; for whatever defects may be imputed to it, those of other Liturgies must be esteemed more and greater; nor can any branch of the Church of Christ throughout the world afford us a Book of Common Prayer which we could venture to exchange for that which God has given us.

Under these circumstances, who shall estimate the blessing of those who humbly use, or the sin and loss of those who capriciously refuse it?

The scandal which is raised against all religion by differences and disunion should render every pious person reluctant in the last degree to deviate from that form of public service appointed by those under whom it has pleased God to place him. And he who, being born to the inheritance of such forms of public worship as the Church of Christ in England has prescribed, can The scandal of disunion.

CHAP. VII. lightly absent himself from her sanctuaries, or refuse to share her prayers, must follow his own preference at imminent peril of loss, not only to his own soul, but to the soul also of his neighbour. He can have no true regard for brethren whom he thus unnecessarily offends by separation from them, and in whose hitherto tranquil hearts his scruples sow the seed of doubt, or plant a lukewarm indecision. And we know that want of charity towards brethren argues, according to the Scripture, want of proper love towards God.

The sin and loss of refusing the Common Prayers.

Great, then, are the sin and loss of those who rend the body of Christ through uninstructed or perverse unwillingness to submit themselves to the ordinances of the Church. No "Act of Toleration," which frees men from offence against the state, can free them from the sin of schism in the sight of God. From whatever benefits communion with the one visible body of Christ carries with it, those who contumaciously depart out of it of necessity debar themselves; and they prove themselves wanting in the true spirit of Christian charity by so doing, which is affectionate obedience to God's command, and disinterested self-denying consideration for our neighbour. Assembling themselves together for prayer in such a manner as to prevent the accomplishment of that last prayer of their Lord, that all his disciples might be one, and the world see their unity,—how can they be truly assembled in the name of Christ? And if their gathering together be not truly in his name, then have they no promise of his presence with them. Apart from the brethren to whom God has bound them, they offer up a sacrifice of their own devising. But of its acceptance by God they cannot be assured; for the oracles of God are silent as to any sanction of it, or utter only intimations of its sinfulness and condemnation.

The bless

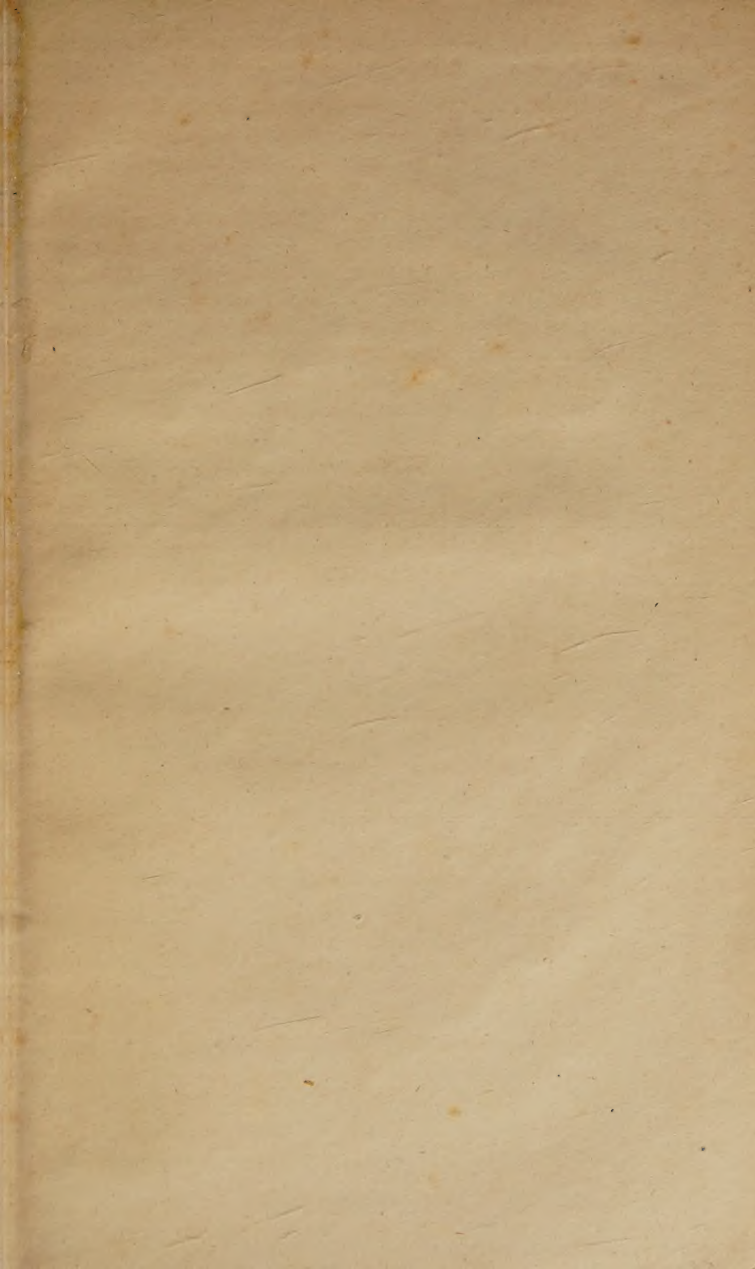
They, on the other hand, who humbly pursue

the course marked out for them, walking in all the ordinances of God's Church, and following their appointed pastors, are sure that in the use of our established Liturgy they are offering a sacrifice acceptable in itself, and calculated to draw down upon the whole body of the faithful the favour and assistance of their Almighty Father. Nothing but a formal or rebellious heart cleaving to sin, or forgetful of its Maker, can render our participation in the ordained Common Prayers of the Church of England unprofitable to salvation. Let such as partake them take heed that they approach the sanctuary of God with clean hands and a pure heart; let them but persevere in faith and patience, perfecting holiness in quiet confident reliance on the Lord. It is impossible they should fail to find all necessary strength and consolation: no power in earth or hell shall rob them of their reward.

CHAP. VII.

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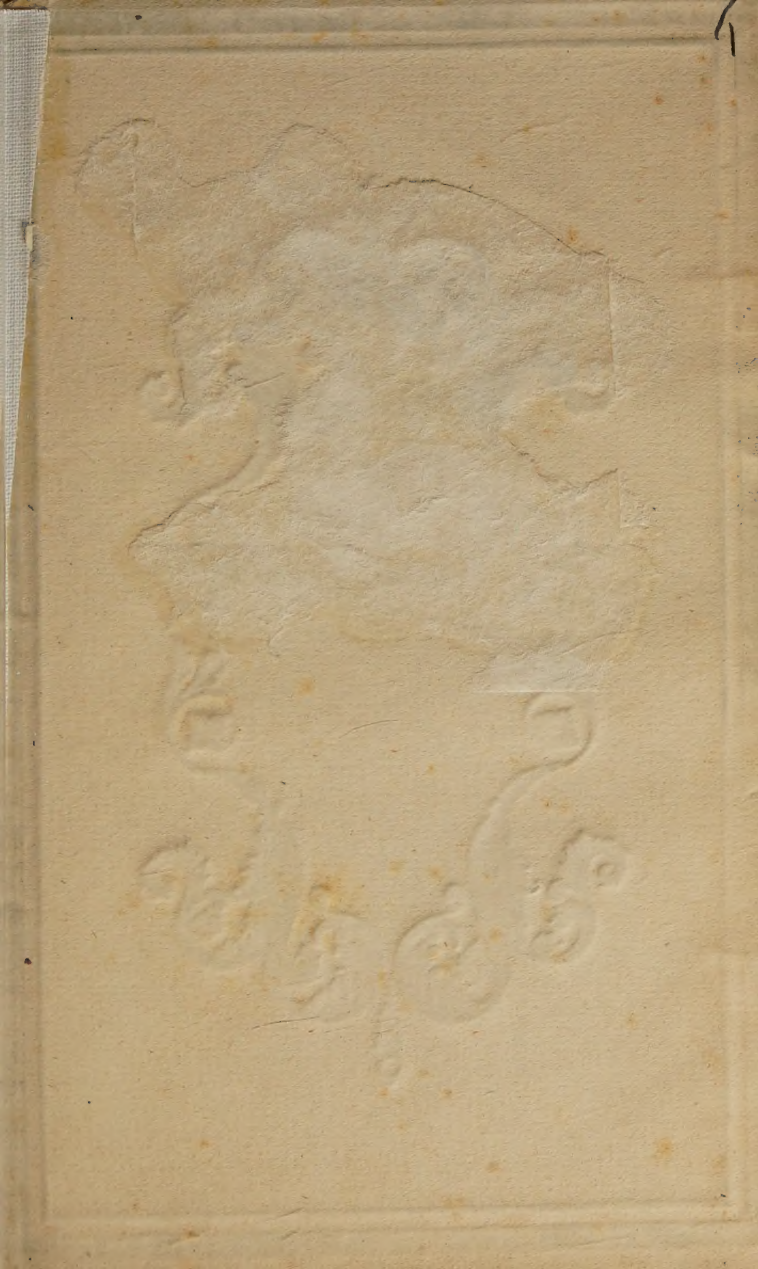
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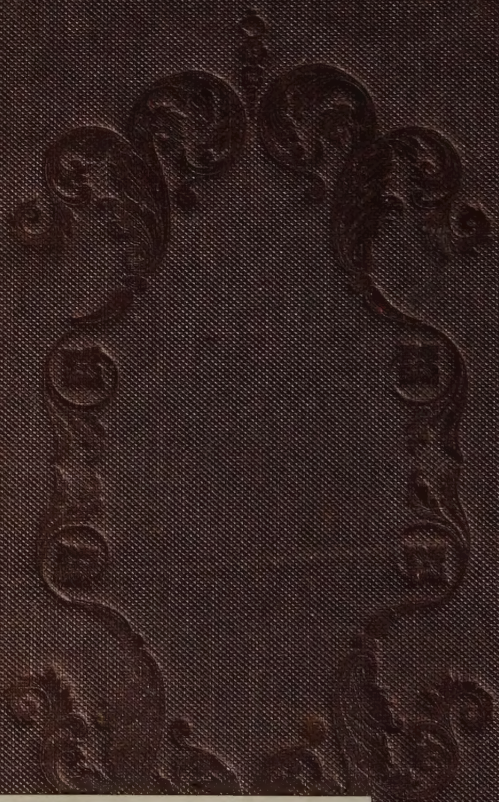


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